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BIRTH OF A WORLD
BOLIVAR IN TERMS OF HIS PEOPLES



SIMON BOLIVAR

From the portrait by José Gil de Castro

BIRTH OF A WORLD

BOLIVAR

IN TERMS OF HIS PEOPLES

by

WALDO FRANK

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Foreword

THE LITERATURE ON Bolivar and his times is enormous. In 1942, the *Biblioteca Nacional* of Caracas published a catalogue of Bolivarian items exclusive of articles; it is a quarto volume of two hundred and thirty-seven pages each of which averages twenty titles, and it is far from complete. The historian must move warily through even the source material; he must not forget that the contemporary chronicles and memoirs suffered from lack of many documents only recently revealed, and from the impossibility at the time of integrating knowledge in a field both chaotic and Continental. In reading the later histories and critical studies, many of them brilliant and profound, he must bear in mind that Bolivar has never ceased to be a controversial figure, claimed as champion or foe by conflicting political creeds and national causes. Moreover, the Legend of Bolivar, both the heroic and the "black," began long before his death and has flourished with tropical exuberance. And although legend, of course, is psychological evidence and of historic value, it must be identified as legend.

In my selection of the material for this book, I have given no statement of fact the benefit of a doubt. Every detail of the narrative is corroborated by a convergence of testimonies. Every quotation of Bolivar's words is either from his letters and

writings or, in a few cases, from contemporary sources worthy of credence, such as, for example, the accounts of his aide, Daniel F. O'Leary, and the report of Dr. Alexandre Révérend who attended Bolivar's last illness. When thoughts and motives are given as Bolivar's and his associates', they derive from the letters or from the clear proof of the action correlated with letters and other documents. This still leaves a dimension of dubiety — not alone because the Hispano-American scene is complex and chaotic but also because penetration into the motives of any man, even of oneself, soon touches mystery — where the author's judgment plays a part. It is not disguised.

Since every stated fact in this work has a source, the strict scholarly method would have been to name it. But this would have meant to riddle the text with footnotes, to destroy the narrative's flow — and to defeat the book's essential purpose. For although my work is based on scholarship, it is meant for the general reader. If he is interested in sources, he will find them classified and discussed in the Bibliography.

Fortunately, the writer who enters this tumultuous world with active skepticism finds ample primary sources upon which to rely. The eleven volumes of Bolivar's correspondence, edited by Vicente Lecuna, contain two thousand six hundred and forty-two letters. Other volumes collect his plentiful speeches, proclamations, newspaper articles and fugitive notes. Bolivar was an articulate man, and a great although uneven writer. The voluminous archives of Miranda, Santander, Sucre, and of other leaders, are extant. The *Memorias* of General O'Leary have preserved (in twenty-nine volumes) thousands of official papers and letters from Bolivar's far-flung correspondents. The press of Caracas, Bogotá, Angostura and other contemporary capitals, provides rich psychological information and genre details between the lines of partisan reports.

But I have built also upon other unchallengeable sources: the peoples, the cities, the arts, the folklore and the *land* of Bolivar's American drama. These are protagonists no less than the man and the leaders with whom and against whom he struggled; and these are present today: to be directly apprehended by the writer.

No biography can touch the truth of a person without presenting the experience of the telluric, demotic, economic and spiritual forces by which he lived. This has become a truism. The Plutarchian "life" is dead. But I believe that in few historic men did these subliminal and collective elements play so dominant a rôle as in the story of Bolivar.

To the statement that Hispano-American history has not yet been corrected by the standards of verification which cultural inquiry has taken over from modern science, there are a few exceptions: one, pre-eminent in the case of Bolivar. As the Bibliography makes clear, this book owes much to many scholars; but I wish here to name Vicente Lecuna of Caracas. Dr. Lecuna has devoted a long life to discovering, ordering and editing the source material relative to Bolivar and to an account of his wars. Dr. Lecuna's early training helped him to apply the cool principles of the engineer, the mathematician, and the economic statistician to his research in a field where this corrosive method was urgent. Moreover, an extraordinary gift for "detective work" has enabled him to run down fraudulent reports and to unmask forgeries and interpolations. Dr. Lecuna has his own philosophy of Bolivar and of America Hispana, with which I may radically differ; but without his meticulous objective work, and without his generous personal assistance in clearing up for me many cloudy episodes, this book could never have been written.

The opportunity to write it came out of the Inauguration in February 1948 of Rómulo Gallegos, educator and outstanding novelist (see Bibliography), who had been elected President by a great majority in Venezuela's first political campaign under a constitution that effectively enfranchised the entire people. That inaugural week in Caracas differed from the customary political-social show of such ceremonies. Its main activities were cultural. The Symphony Orchestra gave a concert of Pan-American music; the Fine Arts Museum hung a representative exhibit of Pan-American painting; the new President entertained the invited intellectuals at a luncheon; and for climax the Bull-Ring staged several free evenings (under the direction

of the poet Juan Liscano) of a program of the folkdance and folkmusic of all the Venezuelan provinces: a performance by their authentic exponents which for perfect presentation I have never seen equaled.

I was lunching one day at the home of Rómulo Betancourt, the retiring Provisional President of the Junta which, the year before, had overthrown the military dictatorship and called the Constituent Assembly that in turn drafted the new liberal constitution under whose auspices the elections were held. We talked of Bolívar; Señor Betancourt asked me why I did not undertake an interpretation of the man and his significance for the modern world. The next time I saw President Gallegos, he told me he had discussed the project with Señor Betancourt, and I accepted the assignment. In November of that year, the constitutional government of Rómulo Gallegos was overthrown by the army. Perhaps when he has concluded this book, the reader will better understand this type of event.

I must express my gratitude also to Mariano Picón-Salas, essayist, historian and biographer of Miranda, for taking the time to read my manuscript in order to check its facts; to President Galo Plaza and Miguel Albornoz of Ecuador; and to Baldomero Sanín Cano, greatest of Colombia's essayists and humanists.

Scores of men and women helped me in my research and in my travels over the scenes of Bolívar's story. I name none, because it would be impossible to include them all. In the Bolivarian countries: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, historians, librarians, public officials, writers, archaeologists, artists and musicians, have given me access to sources of all kinds: documentary and aesthetic. But even if I could list all those who specifically aided me in my preparation for this book, I should be omitting a most important factor: my more than twenty years of intimate contact with the men and women of America Hispana. This experience is the book's foundation.

For the frontispiece and maps of this book, I am indebted to the following: above all to Alfredo Boulton, the photographer of Caracas, for the photograph of the Gil portrait of Bolívar

which is reproduced as the frontispiece; and to Dr. Vicente Lecuna, the historian of Venezuela, for permission to base my maps of Bolívar's campaigns on his own (originally published in his *Crónica Razonada de las Guerras de Bolívar*¹); also to President Galo Plaza of the Republic of Ecuador; and to the Institute of Pan-American Affairs.

* * *

Biography of course is portraiture, and portraiture is always a transaction of *the present*. In painting (and in photography), the present is manifest; the sitter is *here*, to be transmuted and composed by the portraitist. In biography, the contemporaneity is disguised, because the subject and most of the evidence are of the past. But the biographical process — if it be more than a mechanical listing of dates and events — brings them into the biographer's present, indeed into his *presence*. Of this complex, dynamic and immediate relation between the biographer and his subject, I wish here to note only that the biographer's *motive* in writing his book is an important part. He may not be conscious of his motive; he may not understand it until his exploration and his work are done. His impulse may be too deep for him to see at first — as a person may be irresistibly drawn to another, and learn only later the meaning of his love.

I have long known that my great interest in the Hispanic world involved a sense of the urgent timeliness of its values to me, as a man of the United States and as one of a generation whose maturity has approximately spanned (1914 — onward) the first crisis of maturity of my country. It took me a long time to realize that Bolívar personifies many of these values and their timeliness — indeed, so essentially that he and his world are ours. Now that I have explored and “lived” his life, it seems to me that Bolívar, if we *experience* him, may signify today as much to the United States as to America Hispana. The mean-

¹ 3 vols. New York, The Colonial Press, 1950.

ing of this for the world, if it is true, given the strategic place and potential creative power of the United States, is manifest. I am certain that this conviction was my basic ground for writing this book at this time.

W. F.

Truro, Massachusetts
January, 1951

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BOOK ONE: *The Kingdoms*

“And Kingdoms
naked in the
trembling heart —”

HART CRANE

I

The Heart

"My soul is beautiful with the presence of primitive nature."

LIKE the human heart Venezuela is a vibrant cone. Its vertex is down. Above its upturned base are the airs of the open sea: Spain, Europe, North America; but the vertex lies deep within the night of Amazonia — rivers and jungles of a visceral world almost as large as Europe. The wall of the Venezuelan vertex is granite and iron mountain, diminutive beneath the Andes to the west, but nineteen times the expanse of the Swiss Alps. The Andes (*metal* in Quechua, the language of the Incas) fracture the trade-wind clouds and sluice their waters back, eastward and north to the Atlantic and the Caribbean, whence the sun has drawn them. But the stone peaks of the Venezuelan vertex do not stand above the rain, they are submersed in it.

The trees mass their foliage a hundred feet above ground, making a solid ceiling which from the air appears the turbulent surface of a sea. Chonta, sumaumeira, cedars and castaños, mahogany, ironwood, laurels, the slender pale-leaved hevea whose hundreds of varieties yield the milky sap of rubber, almond trees with glorious corollas, camphor, cinnamon, bamboo, woods hard as steel, balsa light as bubbles, ceibas with cottony blossoms, higuerones whose roots writhe high above the earth, chirimoyas with single fruits of fifteen pounds, make this solid ceiling. Thrusting through them are the palms, the *Carolina*

princeps with huge purple flowers, the august royal palm, the feather-leaved yarina, the wax palm that stands like a ghost a hundred feet above the hundred-foot green roof. The myriad species intermingle and bear hybrids: many-shaped leaves upon a single branch. Beneath the ceiling are the lesser breeds, the shrubs and lianas. The ground is invisible beneath the compost chaos of dead trunks and brush, subdued to a hot dusk that glows with flowers: giant begonias, cyclantacea, myriad-hued orchids. The forest has its own wild creatures, ferocious and dynamic as the beasts: the ficer, whose roots swarm and raise new trunks in herds; the saprofita, a vegetable vulture; the heterotropa, pale and without chlorophyll, that sucks the chlorophyll of the green growths and kills them. Some of these monsters can fell the highest trees. The matapalo at its birth is an imperceptible incision in the bark near the base of a giant mahogany or ceiba; it sends a frail root down to earth, it rears a bushy head, lateral tentacles creep about the immense trunk, drinking its blood, thickening, become octopus arms to embrace the giant and to strangle it; the fattened cables spiral upward until the crown of the great tree a hundred feet in the air is stricken and the whole trunk rots. The matapalo devours forests within the forest, and itself dies with only blackened stumps to feed on. The lowest brush is the home of insects: the ants that can consume a city, the scorpions, the hairy spiders large as a hand, the deadlier clouds of gnats, zancudos, mosquitoes, each nation with its precise hour of day or dusk or night to army forth on its crusade for blood. It is the hunting ground of the pachyderm, nimble-nosed tapirs and ant-eaters. It is the ambush of serpents, among them pythons and boas that can swallow a peccary whole and lie for weeks, digesting flesh and bone. In the high branches, a thoroughfare from tree to tree, dwell the conversational monkeys, harmless intellectuals of the jungle, and the vocal birds, clad in bright metropolitan colors. But this intelligentsia must be wary; the puma and jaguar can climb and often leave the ground to stalk their prey for hours at the treetops.

The only roads for man in this intestine world are its in-

numerable waters: hot, fetid with the deaths of beast and vegetation, and full of peril. The manati, "the fish with hands," an herbivorous half-ton of flaccid flesh, is harmless; also the tonina, the river dolphin, and the ten-foot piraiba. But the small piraña (called caribe on the Orinoco in honor of the man-eating Indian nation whose sole art was war) flashes up in hundreds from the muddy bottom and rips the flesh from the bones of the careless fisher. (If he catches the piraña first, he has a savory breakfast.) The alligators or caymans, motionless as logs, erupt in swift, deadly attack. Mosquitoes bearing fever swarm above the waters; and deep in the muck lie batteries of power: the electric eel, the gymnotus, the torpedo whose shock can shatter man or beast into convulsions. On the slow streams, seldom touched by wind and never by the sun, spreads a vast flower, often in mile-long colonies. In Quechua, it is atunsisac; on the upper Amazon, it is iapuna-uaopé: but the English explorers honored their Queen by calling it *Victoria Regia*. It is a Nymphaea with subaqueous leaves six feet long, and each leaf weighs fifteen pounds. Its petals, over a foot in length, lie white on the brown waters, with emerald borders and corollas of violet and rose. One blossom will measure five feet in circumference, weigh four pounds, and it exudes a heat far higher than the heat of the air or of the water to which it is anchored by great tough cables, lissom above, thorned below against the mouths of fish or manati. Herons rest on it at their peril, for it is a favorite siesta place of deadly watersnakes and boas.

The jungles toward the Orinoco's birth have no sky. But on the streams that writhe from east and west into the rivers, which in turn feed the Orinoco northward or the Amazons to the south, the sky comes down, a sultry, misty breathing: variant of river, as the rivers are a variant, putrid and deliquescent, of the forest. Without wind, the airs, too heavy, move with the indolent diurnal seasons; for each day has rudimentary epochs of the year: the winter of the faint chill dawn, the spring of morning, the summer of noon and fevered afternoon, and suddenly night's autumn. Each day merges with the last and the next; time blurs, erasing the sense of months and of

years, into a grey euphoria of existence. Even the visual contrast of night and day is expunged: for day without sun is grey, and noise makes the black night brighter than the day. The wall of trees on the stream's margin beyond the sand, the somnolent cayman, the roof of green under the fummy palms, awash all day like a low tide of vapors, sink into night and are suddenly uplifted. The birds by day have slept, the monkeys have stilled their commentaries, the hunter cats have lain in their lairs; the hum of insects under the organic brush has made a canon with the susurrant growth of leaves. Now the air, plummeted into swift absolute darkness, stirs and lunges, swaying the high forest, rustling its multitudinous members like the tidal turn of ocean waters. Terrible is this utterance as of anguish, after the day's hush. The puma and jaguar wake to torturing hunger, the monkeys chatter and moan, the pecaries, sloths and dantas voice the blind frustration of the wild; soft wail the sapajous, shrill shriek the parakeets and curassows.

Men dwell in this threshold of existence. We call them Indians; they have hundreds of tribal names, and although they are a few score thousands in all the immense basin of the Amazon and Orinoco, they speak hundreds of languages. They live as they have lived for ages, within an adjustment to their world too perfect to have history — an adjustment that might be the envy of the dwellers in modern jungles of the machine who, under such names as pragmatist or positivist, worship adjustment as an ideal. The Indians, too, have infinite information about their natural resources. They know balsamatic scents, opiates for sleep or ecstasy, cures for snake-bite, for dysentery, hemostats against bleeding, purges for constipation. They know gamuts of medicinal poisons, the "fever-tree" for malaria, the mold decay that sweeps the blood like penicillin, the yanamuco that embellishes the teeth, hardens the gums and prevents caries. They make deadly curare of the strychnotoxifera and even more swiftly fatal weapons from the huando bush. With their bamboo arrows, tipped with chonta that is harder than flint, they can shoot a fish thrusting its nose an instant above water; and without compass or sun to guide them,

they can make their unerring way from stream to stream through the jungle. They weave cloth from the fibrous pita, cotton and chambira; they have other fibers for mosquito netting, thatch for roofs, wood for houses, paint (red is the favorite) to adorn their bodies. They cultivate cassava and yucca in the clearings, and have intricate lore for hunting every edible or dangerous beast. They love flowers, and know the home of the fairest, such as the alfaró and the barnadeira, within the thorniest bush. With their shrewd skills, like the less well-adjusted dwellers in the North American city-jungles, they have contempt for metaphysics. If they knew, they would despise the sun-cult of their collateral forebears, the Incas, and laugh at the Peruvian notion of an "invisible god." To them, the dew is "spittle of the stars," meteors are "stars' urine." But the heavenly bodies, seldom seen, are unimportant. They know the best dry places for the most succulent iguanas, and the varieties of ant that make the most delicious paste (a staple of their diet). For delicate fare, they favor the tarantula, roasted alive on a slow fire like the lobster in our expensive taverns. The apt young man, perhaps a Piroa of the Orinoco, can recognize the cave in which the "monkey-spider" lives, behind decayed dense leaves. He cuts a stick from a liana and pokes its point inside, slowly stirring about and then slowly withdrawing. The object is to anger the beast and make it pursue the invader. As the red, hairy body appears, wide as a spread hand, the Piroa pins it to earth with swift fingers and deftly twists the furious legs over the tarantula's back; then lifts it, pinches the poison sack and watches the lethal drops fall to the ground. The spider, still alive but harmless, is placed in a bag, ready to be roasted.

Such gallant arts are exclusively the man's; his woman is a poor creature: despite her daily baths, unclean and unlovely. The rude work is all hers, while her lord hunts, fishes, sings, goes on periodic binges, and sleeps off the effects. These are clearly understood and controlled. The yopo herb induces temporary madness, an ecstatic unity with nature; and may be enjoyed only with other men. The simayuca is a pleasant

aphrodisiac, and is shared with his woman. His language brothers are his nation; men of other tongues are alien animals. He has neither general ideas nor ideals; his religion is magic (the first science), utilitarian and local. He lives in a lavish but ferocious world; he has learned its properties as they touch him, and he exploits them. Having an immemorial adjustment, he strives to keep it; at times with the help of swift excursions, through drugs, to ecstasy and intoxication. He has no plastic arts beyond tools, no literature or music beyond songs, no architecture but his hut. He has vague myths of a Deluge. But he is indifferent to human origins and ends. In brief, the Indian of the Jungle is a sophisticated human being: practical, pragmatic, shrewdly ordered to his milieu. His essential difference from the modern of our cities is that he lacks (or has totally lost) the dimension of a religious culture. The motive of spiritual re-creation produced in European man the motive of re-creating the natural world; from the idea of understanding and of changing himself, he reached the idea of understanding and of changing the world — with all the vast proliferations of scientific method. The Indian of the Jungle appears to have avoided this transfiguring impulse, which moved his collateral ancestors to leave the Jungle. But that impulse, after it has transformed the natural world, may die. Then the world, converted by machines together with technics and the tradition of mechanical transformation, becomes a new kind of jungle, which our new race of primitives adjusts to, as does the Indian to his unconverted Nature.

Long ages ago, this child of the drenched hot Forest, docile, fierce and shrewd, had variant brothers who left the Jungle and produced great cultures: the Maya of Guatemala, the Toltec and Zapotec of Mexico; the San Agustín of Colombia, the Tiahuanacu and Chavín of Peru. Much later came the imperial organizers: the Aztecs and Incas. The permanent forest world remained; the Incas, for a few generations transfiguring a region wide as Rome's, could not move it. The missionaries of Spain found the forest world unchanged. And it endured

unchanged, when Simón Bolívar¹ was born three centuries later far to the north of the Forest.

From Venezuela's vertex of jungle and stone falls the great river, Orinoco. Some of the waters flow south and are borne by the Casiquiare into the Rio Negro and the Amazon. But the Orinoco, still a gentle stream with matted jungle banks, descends northwest, then due north until it meets the mountains of Maipure and Atures. Here the waters turn violent, crashing through the granite, roaring in cataract and rapid, leaping and spuming down the mountain until they spread upon the low, flat plain, the *llano*: sixty thousand square miles of it, the north-turned base of the heart of Venezuela.

The plains Indian of Venezuela is a nomad, without even the rudimentary agriculture of his forest cousin. In summer, the dry season, he spears fish and hunts the roebuck, the gazelle, the wild pig, the rabbit, the marauding puma. In his land, unlike the ever-drenched forest, the seasons are divided; after the rainless summer comes winter in April: months of overwhelming downpour that flood the rivers and the streams until the plains are drowned. The alligators break from their summer "hibernation," which they have slept through, caked in dry mud. The venomous snakes spread, the mosquitoes swarm, the deer drown by thousands, and their young are bitten by the snakes. If the plains Indian is more miserable than his jungle cousin, it is because his world is harder. The summer sun is fierce, but the winter rain is an ordeal almost beyond bearing, by men without the means of modern science. Often it is impossible even to fish in the floods; and the plains Indian will have nothing to eat except an oleaginous clay which he has rolled into balls and stored in his hut, built of the moriche palm. The clay and the water keep him barely alive until the rains cease, and the land blooms with thorny palms, the *píritu*, the *palma de cubija*, the coarse silver chaparro grass rising higher than his head, and the cactus. Often the land flowers

¹ Henceforth, the accents in this name will be omitted, but the reader should bear in mind that in both Simon and Bolivar the second syllable is stressed.

with vast fields of white cypura and mimosa, lofty as palms, breasting the groves (called montes) of sarrapia and cedar. But even now, the yield of food is mean. On the accessible rivers, the plains Indian shoots fish and aquatic birds with his blowgun, a tube of bamboo, or gathers eggs of the giant turtle whose depositaries in the sands of the rivers he travels hundreds of miles to reach at the right season.

The middle link in economic evolution between the hunter and the farmer is the pastor. In the Andes, the llama and alpaca were the Indian's horse, cow, camel and sheep. Perhaps, had he not been deprived of beasts to tame and live with, the plains Indian might have had a different destiny. He survived the brutal cycle of his seasons, coarse, complacent, shut from the too hostile sun and air: unfertilized in spirit. But the plains tribes . . . Guamas, Achaguas, Guajibas, Chiricoas, Ottomacs, scores of others . . . dreamed of great brothers in the southern Forest. Their tales sent Sir Walter Raleigh, the Spaniards, the Germans, and again and again the Spaniards, during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, into the dark wood in search of El Dorado. The legend was of a golden king, *el rey dorado*, whose chamberlains each morning powdered his body with gold. The greedy Europeans found only madness and death in the dark wood. But there was a displaced truth in the Indians' stories. For the great cities of the Andes worked in gold, as our ancestors in iron and copper. And the prehistoric forebears of these cities emerged from the continental Jungle whose waters diversely flow into the three great rivers: the Magdalena, the Amazon and the Orinoco.

When the Orinoco, rolling north, meets and absorbs the Apure that has descended from the west, it turns abruptly east, away from the Andes. It is now a savannah of water, thirteen thousand feet wide in the dry season, thirty-five thousand feet wide in the wet winter, when it has risen in some places as much as eighty feet. The Apure is the most famed of the myriad Venezuelan rivers falling from the Andes. If one ascends it from its absorption in the Orinoco, one moves

through both forest and plain. Squads of crocodiles twenty feet long, lie stirless in the sand, their jaws portentously raised. Troups of dantas break the high hedged banks of cedar and *lignum vitae* to plunge into the stream, where they remain for many minutes. Jaguar and roebuck come to the edge to drink. And beyond, far to the west, rises the great wall of the Andes.

The mountain Indian of Venezuela is intermediate between those of the plain and those south in the mountains from Colombia and Ecuador to High Peru. The great cultures never embraced, barely touched him. He is a grey-minded stocky mountaineer, clad in black, averse to color and to expansive utterance, a plodding toiler with scant imagination and a spirit that flames only through loyalty to a chief or when invasion pierces his sluggish armor. When the Orinoco flows into the quiet of the plains, the Apure brings to it the western mountains: literally brings them in the trunks of uprooted trees, the floating islands that its current has torn free, and by communication carries this spirit of the mountaineer, the Andino, to the open country. The Orinoco rolls along, due east with many a swirl and twist that frequently devours fertile acres before the new channel is ploughed clear. Past the black rocks of Angostura. Finally, as it sprays into the thousand-mouthed Delta, before its death in the Atlantic, again there is forest, a land of Caribs so savage that no other Indian tribe can live with them and that Spain's law, which in Christian theory regarded the Indian as brother of the Spaniard, permitted their destruction on sight as if they had been wild beasts.

At the west of the north-turned base of the Venezuelan heart, fronting the Caribbean, east of the ice-capped Andes of Santa Marta and the hot, bare peninsula of Guajira, is Lake Maracaibo. In the last years of the eighteenth century, Alexander von Humboldt noted the iridescence of its shores, the subaqueous springs of what he called "petroleum." (Now in the shallow waters and on the shore stand thickets of oil wells, whose economic power unbalances the land as crucially as did the wars of independence). From here eastward, a coastal range,

cyclopean clinkers and piles of black scoriac rock that look like semi-smelted iron, beats off the rains and sends them southward into the tributaries of the Orinoco, leaving the north shore barren. When the wall breaks, waters flow north; there are oases. One is Coro, where Columbus first touched mainland: Tierra Firme, and where, three centuries later, Francisco de Miranda made his impotent landing to free America of the Spaniards. Farther east is a gigantic gorge, drenched with springs, stifled with tropic green, too narrow for the sun, which pours its waters into the secluded harbor of Puerto Cabello. Here, the Spaniards built the fortress (second in strength only to Cartagena) where Bolivar first knew treachery and failure. Still farther along to the east is verdant Ocumare — where Bolivar was broken in his third invasion of his native land and stood alone on the beach, a pistol at his brow, to avoid capture by his enemies. Farthest east, the coast turns south toward the Delta of the Orinoco, and here is the little island of Margarita, whose harbors are rich in pearls and whose soil is poor in water; whose handful of citizens, tough as their land, played a part in the drama of independence, out of all proportion to their number or wealth. On the coast itself are towns: Barcelona, Cumaná, Carúpano, Carioca, scenes, again and again, of Bolivar's struggles and of his early defeats. From this long borderland, mostly desert, the great river seems remote. But its spirit is present.

About halfway between Lake Maracaibo and Margarita, ensconced in the coastal range, are the valleys of Caracas, Aragua and El Tuy. Here at last, within the violent, vibrant heart, is happy land! The slopes are green, the high thin air tempers the tropic sun and cools the nights; the soil is deep loam; the streams, margined by bamboo, mimosa, caña amarga, the wild bitter cane, flow gently in all seasons. In these happy valleys, the aristocrat creoles² of the Captaincy General of Venezuela (among them the Bolívars) had their estates: not immense, not immensely rich, but far from poor. Slaves worked

² Creole (*criollo*) designates the old settlers in Spain's American realms, whose blood was pure Spanish.

them at ease, harvesting the coffee and cacao (both of supreme flavor), the indigo, the tobacco, the sugar and numberless fruits. The heavy laden burros clambered the roads to Caracas and Valencia, and down to the sea where the infrequent vessels loaded them, in exchange for manufactured fineries of Europe: brocades and damasks, Toledan blades, baroque beds, harpsichords, paintings and books. The capital was Caracas, and there the creole families (called *mantuanos* after the Italian shawls which only the rich ladies were privileged to wear) had their town homes. These, with the dwellings of the officials of State and Church, predominantly Spanish, the cottages of the artisans and the thatch-roofed slave quarters, made the modest provincial capital, low in its well-watered valley under its minor Andes which were a defense to the north from the Caribbean pirates and to the south from the fierce hot winds of the plains. The churches, unlike those of Mexico, Santo Domingo, New Granada, Quito and Peru, were without splendor either of gold or of genius. The houses, even the richest — among them the birthplace of Bolivar — were of one story, spreading in many patios, each refreshed by palms, orange trees and mangoes: a patio for the masters' rooms, a patio for kitchen and laundry, a patio for the baths, a patio for the house slaves, a patio for the stables . . . far from the narrow stone street, a demesne of shade and intimate communion. Spain wanted gold and silver, and got them from Mexico and Peru; Spain's centers for bureaucracy and defense were Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Cuba. Venezuela was a subaltern colony and, left to itself, developed a new native life both simple and independent. The parasitic classes, drawn to the honey of power and of wealth, had no eyes for Caracas. Until almost the end of the Spanish rule, Caracas had no Archbishop, no Main Holy Office (Inquisition), no university. (The universities of Lima, Mexico, Quito, dated from the early fifteen hundreds). The mother-country's indifference to Venezuela is stressed by the fact that from 1706 to 1721 no single Spanish merchant vessel warped at its three main ports: La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, Maracaibo. At one time, the colony's business had been traded

off, lock, stock and barrel, to the Germans, who bungled the chance of a foothold on the Spanish Main. In 1731, the Crown turned Venezuela over to a commercial house of Basques, the *Compañía Guipúzcoana*, who, from remote Spain, proceeded to rationalize the production, the trade and the costs of every town and village, as if these were abstract factory units, not the homes of a folk already in mind and economy on the way to individuality. The citizens of Caracas, Valencia, La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, Barquisimeto, Coro, Mérida, Calabozo, were not consulted, not their needs, not their capacities. Production and prices were fixed; monopolies, taxes and fines were arbitrarily administered by remote control across the ocean. But the colony had grown, if slowly. The false value-system of gold had brought inflation and forced even Spain (too late) to listen to her pioneer economists of the sixteenth century who, long before Adam Smith, had stated in vain that the basis of value was not metal but labor. The position of Venezuela upon the Caribbean Sea exposed it to the roving privateers and contraband traders of other nations and to the winds of new doctrine blowing from North America, France and England. Soon, no shipment of pots or pans was complete without its smuggled invoice of books hostile to feudal Church and State. Priests and clerks were often the purchasers of heresy; Spain had to change her bureaucrats in Venezuela every half-decade, so swiftly did they become "corrupted."

If the spirit of the Orinoco with its dark and violent freight was present in the happy valleys of Caracas, Aragua and El Tuy, the cultured creoles did not know it; and the colored artisans, the pardos,³ and mestizo ⁴ farmers did not know it. These comfortable classes scarcely were aware that a great river flowed far to the south, beyond the scoriacious mountains and the llanos inundated by winter, scorched by summer. The life of the Orinoco was more remote from the conscious minds of the dwellers in the happy valleys than Madrid or Paris. An occa-

³ Those of mixed European and Negro bloods.

⁴ Those of mixed European and Indian bloods.

sional priest or friar, after years of missionary service in the Forest, showed up in Caracas on his way home to retirement in Spain. His stories were of men and beasts in a prehistoric world not more real to his hearers than the sea monsters on the brink of the Ocean sea described by mariners before the generation of Columbus. Yet the great River was there: in the gentle valleys, in the squat towns pierced by clumsy church steeples. The River's jungle and cataract and mountain, its beasts and its wild men shrewdly attuned to wildness, its savannahs of inordinate sun and overwhelming rain, were present in the somnolent haciendas and the cities. The people would know, only when the River was revealed in their own shattering heartbeat, and in the blood on their hands.

I I

Education of a Provincial Prince

"Born citizen of Caracas, my greatest ambition will be to conserve this precious title: a private life among you will be my delight, my glory and the revenge I hope to take on my enemies."

THE HOUSE in which Simón José Antonio de la Santísima Trinidad de Bolívar y Palacios was born faced the Plaza San Jacinto, now a vociferous marketplace, then (the day was July 24, 1783) a gracious broadening of the narrow rectangular stillness of Caracas. Over the opposite one-storey houses, roofed with tile or thatch, rose the Avila, the mountain that looks down on La Guaira and the Caribbean. Simon at the barred front windows of his home could be aware of the flat city, the steep rising earth that swiftly lost its verdure in rock iron-black, and over the rim the open world. His home was sonorous like his name. Over the stone portal was carved the family escutcheon, the arms of the first Simón de Bolívar, called El Procurador,¹ who at the age of twenty-seven, in 1559, left the Basque land of Bolívar near the Bay of Biscay for Santo Domingo, serving as scribe and man of law, and after thirty years accompanied Don Diego de Osorio, Captain General of Venezuela, to Santiago de León de Caracas. The village was only twenty-two years old. The Indians of the tribe Caracas had called its valley Toromaima, which means a deep wooded place at the foot of a great mountain. The first chroniclers found its climate "cold, misty, humid with rains all year, but especially

¹ State attorney.

from May to December" and with "nights of a foggy piercing wind." There were fewer trees when the last Simon was born; therefore less rain and more sun; the sharpness of endless April had mildened to May.

The first American Bolívar, who had taken his name from his mother's petty noble lineage in Spain, was a tough old lawyer. He remarried at sixty-eight in Caracas, got into trouble for maladministration of royal funds, was removed from office and jailed; but this was the work of an overzealous captain general: the King had him released and granted the old man of seventy-five a pension of "120,000 maravedis that he may enjoy them for the rest of his life with no obligation to serve." Before he died, Bolívar had changed the spelling of his name to Bolívar.

The second Simón, like his father, was a man of the pen, not the sword. Late in life he became a priest and headed the minor Caracas branch of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. He founded the family fortune; the reward of his intellectual and spiritual services was the *encomienda*² of San Mateo in the luxuriant valley of Aragua. Already in 1550, *encomienda* was a euphemism for a domain of slaves. Early in life this Simón had married, like his sire, a daughter of conquistadores. Their son, Antonio, became a captain and a judge (*corregidor*); he enlarged the holding of San Mateo, and he too married the daughter of a family of conquistadores. Their son was also a captain and a judge; and it was he, Juan de Bolívar y Villegas, who first occupied the house in the Plaza San Jacinto, a heritage of his wife. If the boy Simon, in the last years of the eighteenth century, turned from the front window of his home he saw a salon in purple hangings and gold-framed mirrors; a deep carpet softened the stone floor and the boy's forebears looked down on him in the stiff oils of the provincial painters. This Don Juan, his grandfather, was a great man. He fought the pirates, the British and French and Dutch who for the most

² The land granted by the King to the early settlers in his American realms. In theory, the *encomendero* brought Christianity to the Indians who lived on his land, and in return for this blessing he could, within humanitarian limits, exploit their "free" labor.

part were indistinguishable from the pirates, perpetually attempting to invade Spanish Tierra Firme (they once burned Caracas before they were driven out); and was made Lieutenant General. Then Don Juan entered politics and became Governor and Captain General of Venezuela (a rare post for a creole). He raised the family fortune to one of the largest in the land. He aspired to a Castilian title, like that of his friend, the creole Marqués de Mixares, and bought one from the monastery of Monserrat near Barcelona, which had two to dispose of. He was to be Marqués de San Luis, the city south of Coro he had founded. But at Don Juan's death, the titular papers had not arrived: a common instance of delay in the court of Madrid. And his son, Colonel Juan Vicente de Bolívar y Pont, father of the last Simon, did nothing about it. To the boy, the portrait of his sire, who had died in 1786 when he was three, was more real than the man; but the man's spirit dwelt in the house. Juan Vicente had been an intellectual, a lover of luxury and women (after his death, a natural son put in a claim on the estate which was legally quashed but which Bolívar's gentle mother honored); he was also, as will be seen, a rebel.

If the son studied the portrait of his father, he saw a man in whom sensibility and intelligence, more dominant than strength, had softened to indulgence. The heavy eyes, the long nose (exaggerated in the son), the sensual mouth with the lower lip protruding, were like the boy's; but the context was mild and without tension. The Colonel had fought the British at La Guaira and Puerto Cabello on one of their periodic attempts at invasion. He had held office high for a creole, such as Attorney General (*Procurador General*); but he was a gentleman of taste rather than action. His anger at the Crown was due to his hurt pride at the restrictions placed upon noble Venezuelans in their own land. He disdained the Castilian marquisate that never came (only after his death did his widow, prodded by her brothers, dare to enquire about it through letters to Madrid); he believed a Bolívar of Caracas needed no title from a smaller, less opulent mother country. He did not confuse his rebelliousness, based on good Spanish tradition,

with the liberal ideas of what to him were the outlandish, inferior cultures of France and England. His small, neglected city was growing rich; it was heir to what for three hundred years had been the most potent, the most creative civilization in the world: that of Spain. Juan Vicente de Bolívar merely wanted his free share of it. Meantime, his thousands of slaves cultivated his lands well; and when he died, his widow and four children inherited a fortune of several million pesos,³ whose equivalent in terms of today's prices would be at least ten million dollars. Here were some of the possessions of Simon Bolívar's father:

In cash: 258,000 pesos.

Two cocoa plantations near Caracas.

Four houses in Caracas, with their slaves, furniture and jewels.

Nine houses in La Guaira.

Silver plate valued at 46,000 pesos.

A country house by the sea.

A country estate outside the limits of Caracas.

The estate of San Mateo, with over 1000 slaves and two sugar mills.

An indigo ranch near San Mateo, in the valley of Aragua.

Three vast cattle ranches in the llanos south toward the Orinoco.

Through a collateral legacy not yet cleared, the valley of Arroa, with copper mines; and the mines of Cocorote.

And, en route to markets on the day of his death,

in Vera Cruz (Mexico)	1185 pounds of indigo
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	119 fanegas ⁴ of cacao
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in Cadiz (Spain)	2421 pounds of indigo
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	697 fanegas of cacao.
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When Simon was born, his father was fifty-seven, his mother was twenty-four. She was María de la Concepción de Palacios, and came also of a noble line, although its wealth was moderate. According to legend, the boy was so headstrong and unruly that his widowed mother sent him to live with the family lawyer, the astute Miguel José Sanz, who also found him unmanageable and turned him over to Simón Rodríguez, a radical young reader of Rousseau. This is improbable. Doña

³ Five pesos = one British pound. ⁴ One fanega = 116 pounds.

María managed with grace her properties and her children. She was a strong woman and her oldest child, María Antonia, as well as her youngest, Simon, resembled her in strength and in feature. The two middle children, Juan Vicente, the heir, and Juana, had the blue eyes, the blond hair, the fragile sensibility of their father. Doña María's father, Feliciano de Palacios y Sojo, was a man of liberal ideas, and his young friend, the radical Rodríguez, served him as secretary and frequented the house on the Plaza San Jacinto. A genteel atmosphere of revolt was common among the uneasy aristocrats; and Simon breathed it at home. He was a studious boy, particularly fond of mathematics. He read good books (there were few others). Each of the four children had a bedroom with a crucifix above the brocaded pillows. Behind the family patio were the household quarters, declining in elegance from the somewhat austere luxury of the master chambers to the stables. Each patio had a columned porch, with fountains and flowering trees: orange, lemon, trinitaria, jacaranda. Simon moved freely from the front rooms, where the town's masters and intellectuals discussed the latest outrage of the Compañía Guipúzcoana, to the rooms of the slaves in red blouses and blue ballooning skirts, and to the stalls of the blooded horses.

In his tenth year, bitter change came to the boy. His mother died of consumption, his two sisters, aged sixteen and fourteen, married and moved away; less than a year later his maternal grandfather, Don Feliciano, who had been his guardian, also died. Before he was eleven, Simon was alone, except for his elder brother with whose temperament he had little in common. His Aunt Josefa, a younger sister of his mother, took care of him; but emotionally and intellectually he was alone. Now came the hour of Simón Rodríguez.

The father of this Simón was named Carreño; the family for several generations had contributed musicians and priests to the community. His brother, Cayetano Carreño, was a meritorious composer of psalms, motets and masses, disciple of the great musician of Caracas, Padre Sojo. An uncle on his mother's side (her maiden name was Rodríguez) was canon of

the Cathedral. Cayetano Carreño was a fanatical Christian, and the two brothers quarreled: "You shame me and our family." Replied the shameless Simón: "Neither will you have to be ashamed of my incredulity, nor I of your superstitions. Henceforth, I am Simón Rodríguez."

Even before the death of Simon Bolivar's mother, Rodríguez had begun to teach him grammar. A Capuchin monk named Albújar gave him lessons in mathematics, and Andrés Bello, already a poet of repute, taught him history. Now, Rodríguez became the boy's principal tutor. At twenty, Rodríguez was balding and stooped, an eccentric figure with his steel spectacles forever on his brow. He wore a cassock of green, too large for him, a waistcoat that sagged to his thighs, tripe-colored breeches, black stockings, silver-buckled boots, a white tie and a black silk cap with a tassel. His ears were large and sessile, his nose big as a Bourbon's, his mouth long and straight, his eyes steel-blue. He seemed to stoop because of the heft of his brow and of his jaw. Young Bolivar, bereft of his family, loved him. But even the town fathers admired him. Rodríguez sent them a paper (the manuscript is still in the city archives) entitled *Reflections on the State of Education in the Captaincy General of Venezuela*. It was lifted only in part from the *Emile* of Rousseau. "In the schools," it said, "boys and girls should study together (an unheard-of innovation): first, in order that the boys, from childhood, may learn to respect women, and second, in order that the girls from childhood may learn not to be afraid of men." "The principal study of the boys," it went on, "should be masonry, carpentry, and smithing; for it is with earth, wood and metal that the most needed things are manufactured." "The object of education," it continued, "is not to produce aesthetes and aristocrats, but to create citizens of the republic." And it amazingly concluded: "Our folk of mixed bloods, mestizos and pardos, have no schools. They are not admitted to the white schools. Then how can we hope they will progress, since all they learn is the oblivion and neglect in which we hold them?" The town fathers, members of the *Ayuntamiento*, solid men of property and law, read the paper

of Rodríguez and, in the way of officials, filed it. But at least, they read it; for the manuscript reveals their initials. And Rodríguez was none the worse off for his candor. When Simon's grandfather died, he was placed in charge of the young prince's education.

Rousseau was the distant master. A premise of *Emile* was the viciousness of the city: "the sink of humankind"; another was the uselessness of books: "I hate books, they teach how to talk of what one does not know . . . reading is childhood's curse." To the solemn educators of his day, twisting, maiming, suffocating childhood into a mean maturity, Rousseau cried: "Is it nothing to be happy? I teach my pupil an art exceedingly long and painful: the art of being ignorant. For the knowledge of anyone who believes he knows only what he *knows* is very little." And after years of his method: "Emile has the universal spirit not because of his accomplishments, but because of his faculty for acquiring them." With most of the nine-year-old boy's books left behind in Caracas, Rodríguez carried his American Emile to the country.

Their horses climbed the flank of a tumultuous mountain. Icy streams poured into hot tangled trees, the summits were dispersions of volcanic rock, the road eased down beside leaping rapids bordered by jigua or guadua, the American bamboo. Rodríguez was robust despite his spectacles and his poor posture; the nine-year-old boy was tense and quick as the lizards who flicked across their path. They trotted through hamlets of bamboo wattles and thatch roofs, the pigs and dogs and naked children romping together in the dust; through villages staring with blind white 'dobe walls at the sun. On the second day, they clattered over the cobbles of La Victoria, a city beneath a square two-towered church on a bare hill. The valley of Aragua broadened before them. The fields were in sugar and maize; copses of banana flourished their huge leaves like wind-mills; over the streams bowed the mamón, the apamate, the flowering trinitaria, the wild bitter cane; the slopes were serried with pineapple, and beyond the grey wooded hills were the Andes. They traversed steep woods of samanes whose

shade sheltered the delicate coffee and cacao. A mile from the village of San Mateo, the Bolívar house stood on a ledge commanding the valley where it narrowed. They passed cottages of slaves, the sugar mill, and mounted the steep path. The rooms were bare, high-ceilinged, always cool. Two exterior stairs from the porch led to platforms on towers and revealed the entire valley: trees in flower garlanding the road, gamuts of green and grey feathering the blue shadows of the river, and the horizons of mountain. Vibrancies of many hands and bodies invisibly at work in its fields tintured the silence. The view was of a world strong, fertile, shut — and self-sufficient. The boy surveying it could say to himself: This is mine!

For five years, San Mateo was Simon Bolivar's home. The young man Rodríguez and the boy slept on hard beds, rising often at midnight from deep sleep to bathe in the icy river. They camped on Lake Valencia; they hunted, riding hard the small hardy horses, an American adaptation from the Arab. They crossed the Sierra into the llanos, the plains, which brought them the breath of the Orinoco; lived close to the Indian and to the *llanero* ⁵ whose Spanish-Indian bloods made a tough alloy. Rousseau had taught Rodríguez: "It is *the people* who make the human race; what is not people is so small a matter it is not worth counting." Simon learned the speech, the touch, the swift action of the folk who can jet like animals from torpor into speed. Near his home, he found slaves and loving them knew the monstrosity of serfdom. Journeys to Caracas were rare; Simon was not tempted to return to the house on the Plaza San Jacinto so suddenly emptied of his kin. Rousseau had said: "It is man's weakness which makes him sociable. A truly happy being is a solitary being. Only the good is alone." Simon Bolivar did not read these texts, he lived them. In Caracas, he had been a studious lad; he had shown talent for the sciences and begun the Greek, Latin and French classics. In San Mateo, he seemed to forget what he had learned. Rodríguez gave him *Robinson Crusoe*

⁵ Plainsman.

and the *Lives* of Plutarch. The slender body grew pliant as a hand, and as responsive to will.

Rousseau had taught Rodríguez: "I am not simply a sensitive passive being, but one who is active and intelligent. . . . But I know that truth is in things and not in my mind which judges them, and that the less of my own I put into my judgment of things the surer I am of getting near the truth: my rule to trust my feelings rather than my reason is therefore confirmed by reason itself." Thus within the matrix of a romantic, lyrically sensitized to nature, was formed attentiveness to facts in their details and hardness. Both Rodríguez and Simon were intellectuals; they did not spurn the discipline of mind, but employed it to discover a world beyond mind. In Venezuela, there was the jungle, the plain, the mountain, and their people. The young Bolívar's revolutionary elders, led by the famous Francisco de Miranda, turned north and east, away from Venezuela, toward Europe and the United States; Rodríguez turned Bolívar south and west, inward — into Venezuela, the Continent, the heart.

Many years later, Rodríguez said of Bolívar: "I am supposed to have been his teacher; more than that, I was his disciple, for he knew by intuition more than I by meditation and study."

But the spirit of Europe, turning against itself, was present in San Mateo. Rousseau had written in 1762: "We approach the era of crisis, the century of revolutions." The prophet should have said: "Two centuries of revolutions." To Rodríguez, this forecast was a platitude. He projected his own unrest upon the people. Spain, he saw, which for three hundred years had made history, founding the new world which the old world needed, was shrinking from her own grandiose creation. Having revealed the globe, Spain like an idiot was trying to insist the globe was flat! From the "barbaric" north, from England, France, the United States, the new deed of history was coming: technics of natural science to master the globe, technics of education and politics to make the people master. It was as simple, Rodríguez believed, as that.

Rousseau's magic from his day to the debacle of romantic Marxism, nearly two centuries later, was the spell of a voice eloquently singing to the folk the emotion of their dream and their need. In all its terms, economic, political, religious, the Catholic synthesis was gone. Both in Europe and the Americas. Far in the future (today still dangerously far!) was the new synthesis in which men, having achieved the power of life and death over themselves, the power to harmonize the torrential forces released by the fission of an old world, shall learn to live . . . not to die. Meanwhile, the folk and their leaders yearned for faith. Rousseau magically gave it: a secular Saint Paul. Reason had served supernatural revelation, establishing the tyrannies of Church and State: reverse the process, let natural revelation, the unchallenged discoveries of science, sanctify reason. Education had served the hierarchic classes: turn education against them. The Christian world had hugely enhanced the value and power of the individual, teaching that he was of cosmic importance (since God was in him) and thus stimulating the will and the intellect that produced mastery over nature. This was the Old Testament of Rousseau. The individual became the cornerstone of faith. Natural man was good; natural man was strong, when multiplied, and could do no wrong. Natural man's additive voice was authority, his contractual agreements were religion.

It was a comfortable creed, and the disasters it led to remained long hidden. According to it, no method of *work* upon the soul was needed; nature inspired, nourished, formed the reasonable means for tearing down the old structures of doctrine and state; and lo! the true foundation was revealed, the goodness of natural man. In place of the old sacrament of faith in Christ and His vicars, substitute the sacrament of self-acceptance; to make it potent, simply multiply it by millions!

This blinding magic the Marxists were to practice with their implicit dogma that proletarians in their natural state are good, and that all evil comes from the classes that exploit them. Whence the logical conclusion that the leaders of the proletariat in its natural state are good, are clothed in the infallibility of the natural mass, and merit total power.

Rousseau's romantic doctrine voiced the huge energy of the peoples, nurtured and stored by the Christian age, and released when that age dissolved. Its source was the Judaeo-Christian premise that all men have value within the self as brothers under God; and the conquering will awakened by this conviction of intrinsic value: the will that produced Western science and technics. The doctrine spread far beyond the bounds of Judaeo-Christian culture; into the East of Europe, into Asia, where the potential energy of man smouldered beneath utmost compression. It has spread round the world. But in the eighteenth century the paradise of Rousseau's dream was America, the literal New World. For here was the primeval Forest, here the primitive man, here the most advanced decay of the old orders, here the most crying challenge for the new. "Strike off the external shackles; let America mother you and free you!" became a spontaneous slogan to dwellers on a virgin continent, and was echoed by the intellectuals of Europe.

Of course, the precise details about the shackles differed from class to class. For the creoles, the shackles were Spain. For the humble, of mixed or Indian or African blood, the shackles were the creoles. . . .

Seventeen-ninety-seven abruptly closed the Emilian idyll of San Mateo. Rodríguez was involved in a broken revolution led by two creole intellectuals, Gual and España. The dragnet of Spain caught and executed several of his comrades and Rodríguez barely escaped with his life by boarding (as "Samuel Robinson") a British contraband sloop off the coast of La Guaira. In Jamaica, he learned English by a method characteristic of the man: he went to a primary school, crowding into the narrow desk beside the little boys who at first laughed, and soon loved him. He sailed on, to the United States, earning good pay for three years as a typesetter in Baltimore. Then he went to Europe; Spain, France, Austria, Russia . . . gave him their sciences; he paid his way as he went, studying chemistry and mankind.

When they parted in San Mateo, Rodríguez was twenty-six,

Simon was fourteen. There is no evidence that the master preached his doctrine to the pupil; he had merely enacted it, and one of its prime tenets was that the boy receive no doctrine. When Simon was eleven, he asked permission of his maternal uncles, Estebán and Pedro Palacios, to go to Europe: which proves that Simon was not entirely absorbed in San Mateo. His uncles explained that the times were inauspicious; and they grew worse in 1796, when Britain declared war on Spain. But two years later, the uncles themselves, who were living in Madrid, urged Simon to join them.

On January 19, 1799, the fifteen-year-old lad sailed from La Guaira. Britain was blockading Habana, and the *Ildefonso* put in at Vera Cruz. Simon spent six weeks in Mexico, eight days in the capital where his letters of introduction found him a welcome in the house of a King's Judge, a friend of his uncles. Again legend fills the gaps of the story: the young Bolivar is supposed to have shocked the Magistrate with seditious words on American independence. This is extremely improbable. Simon was too much of a gentleman, and far too shrewd to mar his pleasure in the great man's house, perhaps ruin his chances of getting to Madrid. From Vera Cruz, after his stay in the capital of the kingdom of New Spain, dates the first of the two thousand and six hundred letters of Bolivar that have come down to us. It is addressed to his Uncle Pedro, then in Caracas but soon returning to Spain. It abounds in bad spelling, for which it apologizes, claiming the fatigues of the long journey in a coach. The style is strong; the details of expense and travel are businesslike. Of the grandeur of the kingdom of Mexico, there is nothing. The hand reveals contradictory traits: intuition of the introvert, and an accountant-like precision. The boy's face at this epoch revealed a similar counterpoint: the great black eyes brood, the arched nose is Roman, the head as a whole is an artist's, reminiscent of young Mozart's; but in the musician, sensuous sensibility remains pervasive, whereas in the young Simon it is breached by a crass note of power.

Uncles Estebán and Pedro had taken a house in Madrid's Calle de Jardines, where their nephew joined them. With

them lived a fellow American, Manuel Mallo, the lover of the Queen María Luisa de Parma, and by that title a temporary and precarious satrap in the Palace. Here again, legend has lavishly embroidered the scant known facts. The lascivious Queen, as alien as her pagan Italy to the severe traditions of the Spanish court, came to the house, disguised, to revel with her paramour; Bolivar is said to have learned his first lesson against courts and king, witnessing, perhaps sharing in, the orgies. The nature of the uncles refutes this. They were sober, pious men, intent on improving their fortunes and careful of their dead sister's son. They urged the older Juan Vicente to revive his claim on the Marquisate of San Luis. It is extremely improbable that they turned their house over to excesses, or that the Queen was interested in debauching a fifteen-year-old provincial from Caracas. Estebán, who was only sixteen years the senior of his nephew, was devoted to him. But the household was dull for the young intellectual. He was becoming aware that Rodríguez had slighted the literate side of his education. After two months with his uncles, he went to live with a very different countryman, the Marquis Ustáriz. Here he found the books that had nourished his old teacher. It was as if a plan had been ordained between the romantic pedagogue and the brilliant nobleman (who probably had never met him). Simon now read and discussed Locke, Buffon, Condillac, Montesquieu, Mably, D'Alembert, and of course Rousseau, Voltaire, Raynal (prophet of American greatness). And Ustáriz introduced him to Homer, Virgil, Cervantes, Alfieri, Pope and Horace. Ustáriz also was convinced of the doom of the old order but this did not inspire him to revolutionary action; he was trying indeed to obtain a ministerial post from the King and was outraged that his American birth barred him. Nor had Rodríguez prodded or prompted his pupil; he had merely fed him. The result in the young man was a suspension, a temper perhaps related to that of Mozart, in which conscious acceptance of an old, gay world was rendered poignantly nostalgic by the unconscious prescience of its death.

When Simon Bolivar did act in Madrid, it was convention-

ally. At the house of the Marquis Ustáriz, he met and fell in love with the daughter of Bernardo Rodríguez del Toro, a noble Venezuelan. María Teresa Josefa Antonia Joaquina Rodríguez del Toro was twenty months older than Simon, who now became all will to marry her. He was seventeen: too young, in the view of her parents. Even had they permitted, there were difficulties: no man of the youth's rank could marry without the license of the King (this was to guard against misalliance). And with a recent fall in the fortunes of Manuel Mallo, none of the creoles in Madrid could ask for favors or quick action. For a while, Uncle Estebán went to prison in the intrigue against Mallo. But soon the dandy was "in" again, and Simon Bolivar urged him to hasten his suit. Meanwhile, he wrote to his Uncle Pedro, whose permission as Simon's oldest of kin was also needed. The letter, dated September 30, 1800, reveals the youth's still far from integrated nature. Part of his "sufficiently copious inheritance," he reminds his uncle, came to him from a cousin, contingent upon his marriage and having issue; otherwise it would go to a collateral branch. Therefore, the letter argues, *first* in order to enhance the family fortune and only *second* because he has fallen in love with a lady of "commendable endowments," he prays for permission to wed, lest he die without children and "may God give me a son to serve my brother and sisters and to be of service to my uncles."

There was little to do but wait, and patience was not yet in his possession. His temper seems to have been short. A Spanish officer in the street made an offensive remark about Americans, and Bolivar drew his sword. He was advised to leave Madrid. From Bilbao, he went on to Paris where he witnessed the plebiscite of the French which, by a vote of 3,500,000 to 10,000, chose Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul. The image of a man so loved by a whole people obscurely stirred him. He returned to Bilbao in the north of Spain and at last his battery of letters and appeals won him the King's permission and a passport to return to Madrid. He married in May of 1802, and the young couple sailed for home from La Coruña. They settled in Caracas, with brief pleasure trips to San Mateo.

Their life was the conventional routine of love and fashion. Six months later, on January 23, 1803, Bolivar's wife was dead of yellow fever.

Nothing remains of Teresa, no letter, no portrait, nothing except her many names and the certitude that her husband loved her greatly. The proof of this is supposed to be his vow never to marry again and the fact that he kept it. Toward the close of his life, he said: "If I had not lost my wife, my whole life would have been different. I suppose I was not born to be the mayor of San Mateo"; the inference being that, had Teresa lived, he would have remained on his estates. But historic men are prone to be seduced by their own legend. The romantic version of Simon Bolivar as so bereaved that his loss changed him is legend, and there are facts to prove it. Of course, he loved his wife, but love is variant as the individuals who have it; mature love is rare as maturity; in complex persons whose elements are not yet fused to integration, love is not whole. Bolivar's conduct after his wife's death reveals a man differing sharply from the legend. He was twenty when the blow struck. Almost immediately he returned to Madrid, sought Teresa's family and mourned with them. He went on to Paris. There, he found a distant cousin on his mother's side, Fanny Louise de Trobriand de Keredern Aristeguieta.

Fanny was thirty; her husband, Count Dervieu de Villars, colonel and later general in Napoleon's army, was fifty-five. Fanny presided over a salon where she received her kinsman, and she resolved to distract him from his sorrow. The salon did not suffice, Fanny received Simon in her bed. This alone proves nothing. The young man was twenty and ardent; no part of his nature or his ethics, or of the custom of his time and place, barred him from so conventional a solace; and he had foresworn a wife, not lovers. But one detail floods the trivial episode with meaning. Bolivar called his cousin and motherly *amante* not by her name, Fanny, but *Teresa*. He did not love Fanny; she did not hold him long in Paris; when he left, his letters fell so far short of what she wanted them to be,

that after he was famous she doctored them for publication; and when he returned to Venezuela he never wrote, and forgot her. Why then did he give this woman the name of his loved lost wife? Teresa had been a dear possession, and was gone. Before her, he had lost his father when he was three, his mother when he was ten; in the mist of youth they had become less objective persons than symbols. He had married Teresa in the fiery haze of passion. He had brought her to his home, and before he could possibly find her within the clouds of his desire, and learn to know her, she was dead. If Teresa had become in his mind a differentiated person, surely he could not have given her name to one so distinct as the pretty, buxom Parisian Fanny. But if Teresa was a mere symbol of womanly solace, of desire requited — and of deprivation? Then Fanny, who also served him as woman and who also *must soon vanish from his life*, could inherit the name. Bolivar at twenty was already conditioned by his losses. He accepted solitude and personal deprivation. The subjectivity of his imaginative youth readily made symbols of relationships. He sensed, vaguely, a design in his life; and although it made him suffer, he loved it. Intuitively, he had felt the design when his wife died — looking poignantly back at all his previous intimate losses; and it was his response to this intuition of design that moved him to his vow never to remarry.

But if solitude was his destiny, to what end? He had no answer. He grew morbidly restless.

In Fanny's salon, Simon met Madame de Staël, Madame de Récamier, the precocious young physicist and chemist, Gay-Lussac. He met the great geographer, Alexander von Humboldt, who at the time knew infinitely more than he about America Hispana; and Humboldt's fellow traveler in the American wilds, the botanist Aimé Bonpland, who so delighted Bolivar that he offered the Frenchman half his income if he would come back with him and settle in Caracas. It was perhaps in Fanny's salon that Humboldt made his famous remark: "Spanish America is ready to be free, but has no great man to take the lead." Simon Bolivar heard, gloomily silent. He

brightened only when he got wind of his beloved Simón Rodríguez, who was in Vienna, working in the laboratory of a noted Austrian chemist. A post chaise conveyed Simon expensively but swiftly as could be, and the two friends fell into each other's arms.

Rodríguez found his Emile nervous, pale, and bored. He tried to seduce him with his new passion of chemistry; Simon watched, listened attentively, and remained cold. Then he took sick, and Rodríguez nursed him back to dubious health. He was like a high-strung horse being flogged to go but with no hint of where. They returned together to Paris. Already, Fanny-Teresa had receded, but the First Consul, who had begun to show his dictatorial colors, fascinated the young American. At a dinner which he gave in honor of Fanny's parents, Bolivar shocked the solid company of Bonapartists by suddenly bursting out against the idol, while the table listened in cold silence. Next day, Simon apologized to Baron de Trobriand for his bad manners, but he did not recant:

. . . The will to dominate and hold first place in the State is the constant preoccupation of the clergy. The bureaucrats hope to hold on to their pay by flattering the man who pays them. Aside from these two classes, I can conceive of no one backing the First Consul, although you, dear Colonel, whose judgment is so sound, exalt him to the skies. Of course, like you, I admire his military talents; but don't you see that the one object of all he does is to seize power? That man tends toward despotism! He has so closely organized the state throughout his realms that no one, hemmed in by his soldiers, his priests, his agents of all kinds, can hide from his vigilance. And you call this an era of freedom? What a virtue a man must have to wield great power without abusing it! How can a people hand itself over to one man? I assure you, in short time, the reign of Bonaparte will be harder than that of the little tyrants he has overthrown.

My vehemence in talk may be the result of scant reflection, but when I discuss I make abstraction of my interlocutors. Whether they have grey hair or black moustaches, wear a sword or a tonsure, I see them as personified ideas and I argue without respect for their rank. I'm far from having the *sangfroid* of Rodríguez or of you, dear Colonel. After all, why should I? I'm not a politician obliged to debate in a deliberative assembly; I command no army and need

inspire confidence in no soldiers; I'm not a scientist who must make his precise experiment with calm and patience before an audience. I'm nothing but a rich man, the superfluous number in society . . . good only for offering dinners to men who are worth something. A sad condition! If you knew how I suffer, dear Colonel, you would be more indulgent.

No, pardon, dear Colonel, I shall not follow your advice and leave Paris, unless ordered to do so. I want to find out by my own experience if a foreigner in a free country can express his opinion of its rulers and if they will throw him out for his candor.

All the letters that passed through Fanny's hands have been adulterated; but these words ring true.

Followed the days when Simon Bolivar is supposed to have squandered his money and substance in dissipation. Here legend exaggerates perhaps more than it invents. Simon visited the gaming tables, although he left no thousands of *louis d'or*, if only because his fortune in land and slaves was not so readily convertible to cash. He knew the facile ladies of the Palais Royal, although in moderation, for they bored him. From the Spanish Ambassador in Paris came the formal invitation to "the lieutenant of the white militia of Aragua," — a title he had received in 1798, to attend Napoleon's coronation. It was declined. On the fatal day, while the streets of the city seethed, the two Simons sat in their hotel room above the rue de Rivoli, lamenting less the foolish enthusiasm of the people than the corruption of their leader.

Napoleon troubled the young American too profoundly. He worshiped the military genius, he envied the man who had the hysterical love of millions, he detested the vulgar demagogue, he sorrowed at the revolutionist turned Caesar. His fascinated gaze unconsciously turned inward; Simon Bolivar obscurely identified himself with the great man and therefore with his weaknesses. Meanwhile, the sense of design in his own life vaguely persisted . . . and kept on pointing nowhere. Rodríguez was worried. Simon's health was affected, and there were days when Bolivar's undirected will stormed with such violence against his nerves that Rodríguez feared suicide. He proposed

a tour through France to Italy: a retracing of Rousseau's footsteps.

The two friends walked to Lyon, savoring the fields so fresh and tame compared to the American extremes of jungle or desert, flood or drought. They visited *Les Charmettes* where Madame de Warens had mothered Rousseau. They crossed the Alps on foot, trying to picture Hannibal and his elephants. Simon's health bounded back. Often, while Rodríguez discoursed on Rome or education or Miranda's plans in London, Simon did not listen, singing a Paris ditty. He was a chaos of contradictory traits, each parabolic and strong, none integrated with the others. It was hard to place a finger and say, *This is Simon Bolivar*. He was frivolous and deep, precise of fact and extravagant of image, humble and arrogant, unhappy and soon parodying his pains; he was the boy Robinson Crusoe homesick for Venezuela and the worldling who knew Paris and Madrid. Each part of him seemed stimulated beyond the possibility of fusion. And until he was whole, Rodríguez knew, he would be nothing.

They reached Milan, and now Bolivar wanted to see what he had flatly refused to see in Paris: on the field of Marengo they witnessed the new coronation of Napoleon before 70,000 magnificently deploying soldiers. Bolivar made dangerous remarks, and Rodríguez hurried him away, fearing he would be arrested. Verona, Vicenza, Venice; Padua, Florence and Perugia, bore them upon roads incensed with history. In late June, 1805, they took an apartment in Rome's Piazza di Spagna. Society welcomed the young exotic nabob and his learned friend; Simon followed the fashions by falling in love with a beautiful Italian lady. His courtship was spurned; quite possibly Simon engineered his own failure.

One sultry afternoon — but let Rodríguez tell the story:

... After dinner, with the sun already declining, we walked to the Monte Sacro. Although these so-called *montes* are nothing but squat hills, by the time we got to the top the heat was so intense we were sweating and out of breath. We sat on a block of white marble, relict of some column devoured by the ages. I had my eyes on the adoles-

cent . . . [this is an interesting slip: Simon Bolivar was nearly twenty-three, hardly an adolescent age! Unwittingly, his teacher recalled the youth's years inaccurately, but with exactitude his condition] . . . he seemed preoccupied, concentrated in thought. For a while he rested; then, breathing more easily, he got up and with a solemnity I shall not forget, he scanned the scene to the horizons, his gaze piercing the yellow mist of the sun and resting on every sector of the city. Then he spoke:

"So this is the city of Romulus and Numa, of the Gracchi and the Horaces, of Augustus, Nero, Caesar and Brutus, Tiberius and Trajan! Here, all greatness has its archetype, all mean-ness its cradle. Octavius hides his shrewd and bloody violence in a mask of public piety. Brutus drives the dagger into the heart of his protector to displace one tyranny with another. Antony gives up his glory to relax in the arms of a whore. Sulla cuts the throats of his compatriots, and Tiberius, dark as night, depraved as sin, divides his life between lechery and murder. For one Cincinnatus, a hundred Caracallas; for one Trajan, a hundred Caligulas; for one Vespasian a hundred like Claudius. This people has contributed to everything: austerity for the republic, depravity for the emperors, catacombs for the Christians, valor to conquer the world, ambition to make all lands Rome's suburbs; women to roll the wheels of coaches over the broken bodies of their fathers; orators to sway like Cicero; poets to seduce like Virgil; satirists like Juvenal and Lucretius; weak philosophers like Seneca; whole men like Cato. This people has contributed to every cause but one: *the cause of the people*. Corrupt Messalinas, heartless Agrippinas, historians, naturalists, illustrious warriors, greedy pro-consuls, exorbitant sybarites, virtues and grossest crimes . . . but for the emancipation of the human spirit, the enlargement of man and of his reason, very little — perhaps nothing.

"Civilization, bearing in from the East, has shown here all its faces. But the heart of man's problem: freedom, seems to have been ignored. It seems the mystery will not be solved except in the New World."

Then he turned toward me, away from Rome. His eyes were moist, he was breathing heavily as if with fever. He said: "I swear before you, by the God of my fathers and the honor of my country: I will not rest, not in body or soul, till I have broken the chains of Spain."

The account is rhetorical and of course inexact: Rodríguez was an old man of nearly eighty when he gave it, in 1850, to Don Manuel Uribe Angel, a respectable Colombian who wrote it down. It comes, refracted through many years, the memory of Rodríguez, the glamor of Bolivar (already two decades in

his grave) — and the final recollection of Don Manuel. Nevertheless, the oath and the occasion are not legend. Bolivar referred to them in his letter to Rodríguez after a silence and separation of twenty years. He was living, now, another moment of self-knowledge, as upon the death of his wife, when he accepted his destiny of solitude and swore not to marry again. He glimpsed his course — and lost it.

Shortly after, he left Rodríguez and went to Naples where he climbed Mount Vesuvius with Humboldt. He returned to Paris; and although he discussed the liberation of America, none of his friends had the sense of a transfigured man: of a Saint Paul after the vision on the road to Damascus. He heard of Miranda's projected expedition to invade Venezuela, called it "a sad business" and wrote to a French friend, Alexandre Déhollain: "They say Miranda hopes to raise the country, which could cause a lot of trouble to the inhabitants of the Colony. Nevertheless, I wish I were already there; I might save myself much loss." He seems to be thinking of his property, not his oath: He took his time about returning. After Paris, Holland; then Germany; in November, 1806, he sailed for Charleston, South Carolina, or possibly New Berne where Miranda had disembarked. These voyages ordinarily required six weeks, which would mean that the unhurried traveler touched American soil at the beginning of 1807. He is said to have visited the battlefields of the American Revolution. Probably he had to go north to Philadelphia or Boston to find a ship to take him to La Guaira. In July, 1807, he was inconspicuously home in Caracas. He was twenty-four years old. The education of the provincial prince was complete; the education of Bolivar had not yet begun.

I I I

Miranda and the Rationalist Revolution

"An absolute democratic government is as tyrannical as a despot."

THE TECHNICIAN

SEBASTIÁN FRANCISCO MIRANDA, born in 1750, left his native Caracas in 1771, and had not seen it since. He had never seen the River and the Jungle. But when he reached Madrid to take on his commission in the Royal Regiment of the Princess (bought for him for eight thousand pesos by his father, an immigrant from the Canary Islands who had prospered in Caracas as a dealer in linens), he was beginning to read the subversive books of France, Spain's ally; and it might well have been a priest in Caracas who first revealed them to him.

Under her great Monarchs, Isabel and Fernando, Carlos I and Felipe II (1479-1598), Spain had struggled to create a world-theocracy: in the fine phrase of Salvador de Madariaga, a "theo-democracy." The New Laws of the Indies (1542) — the most humane of any empire before the twentieth century; the royal patronage of libertarians like Las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria, founder of international law, revealed the sincerity of the effort. It failed. *Obedezco pero no cumplo* (I obey but do not fulfill) was the golden rule of the American lords who drove the Indian, enslaved the Negro, ground down the mestizo. Yet to deny that the spirit of the Christian Republic suffused the American Spains would be as false as to assert that it prevailed. Christian Spain was articulate chiefly in the pri-

vate deed of humble men and women. This Spain was invisible to Miranda.

What had been under the great Kings a vision of Man, glorious but impossible, soon was an obsolescent theory exploited by bureaucrats and princelings for their own preservation. Yet during the entire seventeenth century, the image of the will of Isabela was worshipped. Black was the court color in Madrid; humility and abstemiousness were the official mode. There was luxury and corruption in the towns, but the Palace temper recalled that stoicism was originally Spanish. In 1700 all this changed. A Bourbon, grandson of Louis XIV of France, ascended the throne of Castile, and theo-democratic Spain was dead. "God be praised," cried the Ambassador with his credentials to the King in Versailles, "the Pyrenees have vanished! France and Spain are one!" The Jesuits, as a subversive "medieval" power, were expelled from their kingdoms within Spain's kingdoms; the Encyclopedists, the Physiocrats, the men of science, were read; Spain for the first time in her history strove to become a modern European state. She did not succeed; the secular concept, native to Europe's North, was alien to Spain's genius. Young Miranda felt, not the genius, but the failure.

In America, the smile of Christian love had become a grimace. The landed creoles fought the self-made men like Miranda's merchant father, the whites held down the colored, the official Spaniards discriminated against the creoles. Even the Spaniards fought among themselves in the American cities; the Basques were peculiarly hated because of their greater aggressiveness in commerce. The bureaucrats employed crude police methods to regiment an orthodoxy¹ they had begun to doubt, and to fight corruption of which most of them were guilty. Miranda knew perhaps vaguely the neurosis of large communities of Indians, robbed of their patrimony and their

¹ But the cruelty of the Inquisition in America has been grossly overdrawn. In three hundred years, in the Americas from Chile to Mexico, with a population larger than Spain's and England's combined, there were less than three hundred executions. Compare this with the religious and political murders of any epoch of Europe — even before our time when mechanized "inquisitions" butcher millions.

pride; he knew of despair among Negroes and men of color, erupting in revolts that were always burnt out with white-hot iron. For all these problems, he had neat eighteenth-century solutions. In nearly three centuries, one hundred and sixty viceroys had governed the American kingdoms, and all but four had been Spaniards; of six hundred and two captains general, only fourteen had been American-born. Answer: With the aid of the enemies of Spain, throw the Spaniards out, and let the Americans govern themselves.

As an officer in Spain's army, Miranda served in Africa against the Moors, in Florida against the British with the expeditionary force that Spain, bound by treaty to France, sent to help the ragged continentals of George Washington. When peace came, the young captain traveled north to see the new republic. He met the Great Man. . . .

December. 8 [he wrote in his diary]. General Washington passed through Philadelphia on his way to Annapolis, to the Congress, where he is going to resign his commission, New York having been occupied (by the Americans) and the Army disbanded. The entry took place at noon . . . children, men and women expressed contentment and delight as if this were the Redeemer entering Jerusalem: such are the superlative ideas, the sublime concepts which this fortunate and singular man has won for himself throughout the continent . . . although there are not wanting Philosophers who examine him by the light of reason and reach a juster notion than the vulgar dream. . . . It is surely strange that with so many illustrious personages in America, who by their virtues and talents have done the great complex work of Independence, not one has the applause or popularity of this General; better said, no one has any at all but he! As the rays of the sun, diffused in the air, are concentrated in a focus with so wonderful an effect in Physics, thus equally the many deeds of numerous individuals, summing to independence, have come to a single focus in Washington . . . a usurpation as capricious as it is unjust. . . .

The following day, I was to see him in the company of Rendón,² and I delivered my letter of introduction from General Cagigal. Thus, I owed Washington much hospitality and dined in his Company during his entire stay in Philadelphia. . . . He is circumspect, taciturn, little expressive, although his suave tone and his great moderation make him bearable. . . . I never saw him put aside these traits, al-

² Spain's minister to the United States.

though the wine flowed with humor and gaiety at his table, and when toasts were made he gave *Three Cheers* with the others . . . considering which, I find it hard to judge his character.

The American Miranda most admired was Alexander Hamilton: like himself, a cerebral soldier, by blood a commoner, by genius an aristocrat. Miranda counted on Hamilton; Hamilton, approving the idea of Spanish-American independence along native-aristocrat lines, told Miranda he would be "glad if that principal agency be in the United States — they to furnish the whole land force, if necessary. The command in this case would unquestionably fall upon me . . . and I hope I shall disappoint no favorable expectation." But when the time came, and the call came (1798), Hamilton scribbled on the back of Miranda's letter:

Several years ago, this man was in America much heated with the project of liberating South America from the Spanish Domination. I had frequent conversations with him on this subject, and I presume expressed ideas favorable to the object and perhaps gave opinion that it was one to which the United States would look with interest. He went then to England upon it — hence this present letter. I shall not answer because I consider him as an intriguing adventurer.

In his own land, they thought better of him. Long before Hamilton made his annotation, Miranda's fame as the promised architect of freedom had come home. In 1783, he had had a letter from three noble creoles of Caracas (who ten years earlier would not have socially received him or his father). *Amado paisano nuestro*, they began:

Beloved Fellow Countryman:

By letters despatched in July, 1781, we have already fully informed you of the lamentable condition of this Province; and of the general despair in which we have been thrust by the tyrannies of the *Intendente*, who, it would seem, has come here for no other reason than to torture us like a new Lucifer; outraging everyone, he and his underlings, and by his example every *Godó*³ does the same, and the worst is that the accursed Señor Minister Galvez (more cruel than

³ The term of the creoles for the Spaniards, *Goth* being the equivalent of *Hun* in a later contest.

Nero and Felipe II combined) approves, and goes on treating the Americans, of whatever race, class or circumstance, as if they were vile slaves; and has just sent an order to all Governors (of the cities) that no American gentleman can leave the country without express permit from the King, which he must petition in his own hand to Madrid; so that you see how we are reduced to a dishonorable Prison and treated in worse fashion than many black slaves whose masters show them greater confidence.

And thus, there remains to us no further recourse than to repulse an intolerable and *infamous oppression* (as you say in your letter to Don Francisco Arrieta). You are the first-born son from whom the Mother-country expects this important service,—and we, your younger brothers, with open arms and on our knees beg it of you for the love of God; and at the first sign from you, you will find us ready to follow you as our chief unto the end, and to shed the last drop of our blood in the doing of honorable and mighty deeds. Well do we know what has come to pass and is happening in our neighbor towns of Santa Fe (Bogotá) and Cuzco (Peru)⁴ but the outcome does not please us, and fearing like consequences . . . we have not wished to take a single step, nor shall we, without the counsel of yourself whose prudence we hold to, as our hope.

Thither we are sending you, with the son of — [two lines blotted] signatures and facts we have deemed necessary; so that in our name and all the Province's, you may part and contract with our full permission and power; and more particularly, should you judge it well, with *foreign nations*, in order to bring relief to so accursed a captivity.

We confide this letter to the *Padre Cárdenas*, monk of the Monastery of La Merced, who is going to Habana; whom you can trust as a brother of Arrieta; and who promises to bring us personally your reply, for our relief; and please God, do you this without fail. May God preserve your valuable life.

Your faithful and loving countrymen, etc., etc.,

JUAN VISENTE⁵ DE BOLIVAR

MARTÍN DE TOBAR

MARQUÉS DE MIXARES

for all . . . for all.

Caracas, 24 February 1782

Miranda was in no hurry. The problem posed by his country-

⁴ A reference to the ill-fated rebellion in New Granada of the Comuneros against excessive taxes and monopolies; and to the Indian revolt in Peru under a mestizo descendant of the Incas.

⁵ So spelled in the original by the future father of Simon.

men, as he saw it, was of method. *One*: procure the means for prying Spain out of America. This should be done by making political and commercial deals, chiefly with England (Spain's commercial and imperial rival) and with the United States; if these failed, with France. The Powers would supply ships, men, money, in return for trade. *Two*: study beforehand the kind of government to establish when America was free.

Miranda, having carefully toured the United States, sailed from Boston for London. Two years since his countrymen's call, and certainly not wasted. The ablest men of the United States were friends of his project (he was quite sure), and at least one, Colonel William S. Smith, secretary and son-in-law of John Adams, American Minister at the Court of Saint James, had volunteered to be his banker.

Miranda found the British statesmen too hurt by the recent amputation of the thirteen American Colonies to be quite ready for his scheme against Spain. With Smith as companion and financier, Miranda crossed the Channel; his Educational Tour of the Old World began. Holland, Prussia (the battle-fields of Frederick), Saxony, Vienna. . . . Smith returned to London, leaving a fat purse with Miranda, who went on alone to Italy, Greece, Egypt and Istanbul. By now, of course, he had broken openly with Spain, whose agents were after him. With a Viennese passport for "Count Miranda," he sailed east into southern Russia. Potemkin, Catherine's favorite, was fascinated by this first Spanish-American he had ever seen, and introduced him to the Empress. At fifty-eight, she was lusty and expansive as her Russia. She loved this racy specimen of republicanism-à-la-mode, carried him along with her north to her sumptuous palaces (probably to her broad bed), and invited him to stay with her forever. Miranda declined, naming his great American mission. Catherine gave him a letter-of-credit for two thousand pounds with promise of more when needed, and wrote to her Ambassadors to protect her precious republican from the reactionary Spaniards. Miranda turned west again, larded with money, credit, and a variety of passports. He was the Russian Mirandow, he was Monsieur de Miran, he

was the Livonian noble Meroff: "truly," of course, as his Empress knew, he was Count Miranda, *hidalgo* of Venezuela, former general on the staff of George Washington. In Switzerland, he became the friend of Lavater, the physiognomist, who found nothing fraudulent in the face of "Count" Miranda. He pilgrimaged to Ferney to honor the dead Voltaire, his master. The Bourbon police of the two kingdoms nearly caught up with him, but he was safe in London in June, 1789, when France exploded.

The Miranda who in London's balmy June engaged a flat of seven chambers at 47 Jermyn Street for the high rent of a hundred guineas, had no penny of his own (remittances from Caracas had stopped when he walked out of the Spanish army); but he had fame — more fame than his country. And from his powdered hair to his silver-buckled shoes, the tall self-made gentleman had presence. His white-frilled shirt and satin waistcoat under the blue of his bright-buttoned coat were immaculate, if somewhat clumsily worn to suggest the untamed power of his native land. His features were sharp, yet the complexion, florid and dark, hinted the exotic. He had good legs, piercing grey eyes, a prominent nose, a chin both sensitive and thrusting. His eight years' journeyings since the anxious letter from three noble Caraqueños . . . years "aimed to occupy myself temporarily by an attentive examination of the various political systems of Europe" . . . had been well-spent. He had known Kings, diplomats, intellectuals; he had had brilliant, indeed royal love affairs; and when a lady was not at hand, he had studied the brothels. At ripe forty, he was equipped (he thought) for his great mission. He had it all figured out, the true political technician. Spanish America from Vancouver to the Antarctic would be one Federation. Its laws would synthesize the best of Rome, Britain, the United States — not forgetting the *nomenclature* of the Peruvian Incas. The Federation would be named Colombia; its capital, Colombo (perhaps one day Miranda?), would be at Panama; its Chief would be the Inca (a later version provided for two Incas, one continuously to travel the vast realm). Nothing remained but to begin

by getting from Britain the ships, the funds, the men. . . . Miranda had the ear of William Pitt, Prime Minister of England. But the peoples of his land . . . the freedmen, the Indians, the peasants, the slaves — and the River and the Forest and the Jungle — were remote as ever.

The years that followed, while the renowned conspirator grew corpulent and grey, were an opera bouffe: tragedy, melodrama, farce, all confounded — a rationalist extravaganza in which the mimes and clowns were statesmen, money-men, intellectuals, soldiers, with Miranda at stage center, his head full of charts for a half-hemisphere's federation, his feet far from the American earth. William Pitt blew hot and blew cold, according to Britain's relation of the moment with her rivals — and kept Miranda on the Foreign Office payroll, in case he might prove useful. Miranda, disgusted at last, carried his scheme to Paris (still drawing his stipend from London). He posed as one of Washington's generals, was made a Brigadier-General of the French revolutionary army; won and lost real battles. When the Revolution lurched to the left, he was jailed, sentenced to the guillotine, gloriously exonerated in a public trial with Tom Paine and Joel Barlow, Yankee poet and American minister to France, testifying in his favor; dined Napoleon Bonaparte on plate of gold in his sumptuous apartment near the Tuileries ("There is one," said the future First Consul, "whom I hope to meet again. Miranda is Don Quixote with a difference — he is not mad"); was jailed again and escaped again — in a wig with green glasses and the old Russian passport of Monsieur de Mirandow — back to England. Catherine had now stopped sending him funds (republicanism was getting too hot in France); Miranda was writing to Bonaparte for his pay as a French general (he had insisted when he took the commission on a life pension), and once more besieging Britain's Foreign Office. But again the wind blew chill. Miranda slipped away to the United States. In the swampy new capital on the Potomac, he dined with President Jefferson and Secretary of State Madison; banked on a vaguely hinted, utterly

fictitious "understanding" between them (Jefferson had promised nothing, Madison had been silent) to raise funds in New York for ships and men — and sailed for Venezuela.

On August 1, 1806, with about six hundred men (recruited from the Bowery and waterfront of New York, trained on ship-board), Miranda entered La Vela, the port of Coro (where Columbus had first touched *tierra firme*) on the Caribbean coast of his native land; easily scattered the slight Spanish garrison, tore down the flag and ran up the colors of Colombia. He marched beneath the wrought balconies of iron, past the oak doors with ornate bolts barring the patios. No one opposed, no one hailed him; the citizens of Coro had fled. Miranda posted his printed Proclamations of the birth of the Republic, and marched back to La Vela. The townsfolk would return, he was sure, read the good news, and flock to him; with an ever-swelling army he would cross the sands and mountains to Caracas. Miranda waited, day after day he waited: no Venezuelan came. But word came of the native militia from Valencia and the capital on the way to destroy him; word came of the *Cabildo's* ⁶ price on his head, dead or alive; word came from Lord Cochrane of England's fleet: London disapproved the Admiral's previous offer to help the revolution. Miranda marched his grumbling troop on board the boats and sailed back to London. There, a friend wrote to the new Prime Minister, Lord Grenville, of his "great longing that a part of the force we are now disposing of, be applied, not to the revolutionizing, but to the obtaining possession of the Spanish Settlement in South America."

Miranda had not touched Venezuelan soil for thirty-five years; no wonder he misjudged a situation profoundly more complex than his simple syllogisms. Through his innumerable talks with Americans in London, he had charted maps of his country, but he carried no compass. Ten years before his at-

⁶ The City Council, composed of men of property and position.

tempt at Coro, the pardos and Negroes of that city, artisans, servants, slaves, hearing of wonders in North America, France and Haiti, had risen against their lords and set up a "republic." The creoles and Spaniards drove them into the desert, where they hunted and slaughtered them like rabbits. Two years later, Manuel Gual and José María España, creole intellectuals and friends of Simón Rodríguez, led a more serious revolt. They issued "republican ordinances," declared the ports free for trade, ended the tribute of the Indians, abolished slavery. España was caught by the King's soldiers, exhibited in a cage, then hanged and quartered, and his severed head paraded through the towns. Gual escaped to tell his story to Miranda in London. Such news encouraged Miranda. But Spain's recent legislation, which permitted the dark of skin to purchase "whiteness" at a price scaled to color, revived the old image of the King; the humble were monarchists again. And Miranda did not know that the priests had branded him an infidel and the British, anti-Christian. (In the popular tongue, *cristiano* meant both Catholic and human.) The rich, moreover, schooled by the insurrections, were not likely to support Miranda until they were sure he was "sound" on the problem of the lower classes. And they feared what foreign troops might do, once they had landed. . . . Spain was still strong, because her American kingdoms were still divided: mountain from jungle from desert, race from race, class from class, modern from churchly doctrine.

Miranda was a man of his age. The old vitalities of Baroque Europe, like the overblown petals of a giant decayed flower, were spreading into capitalism. Contrast between the profound energies released by Christian Europe and their empirical direction is the eighteenth-century mark. Faith in man's divine origin had inspired technics to conquer the world; for three hundred years the body and mind of the West had horizontally expanded; now technics conquered faith. Technics of all kinds: mechanical, political. A continent needed to be set free? go to the technicians, the diplomats, lawyers, traders; employ the motive powers of rivalry and wealth. This was Mi-

rand's method: to build *a machine*, and when it was ready, *to apply it to the people*.

The energies of men had covered ground vastly beyond their capacity of inward control — for which no technic was provided. This had been the age of Cagliostro, technician of impostorship; of Casanova, technician of seduction; of Rousseau, who got rid of his children to write a master-chart for education; of the German Catherine, Empress of Russia, who naïvely mingled autocracy and liberalism; of Napoleon, first modern magnate in imperial trappings; of Jefferson, who placed classic edifices in the wilds of Virginia, abhorred bigness and bought Louisiana, loved liberty and did not free his slaves, invented machines and so little understood the machine's nature that he provisioned for America boundless years of small villages, small merchants, philosopher-farmers! Children wielding the resource and power of giants! Much of them was in Miranda, of whom Lavater, seer of faces, said: "Miranda is a man who is actually composed of a world of men." Perhaps . . . but without the organic principle of integration.

1810

IN THEORY, Spain's colonies were kingdoms, held by the Crown for the conversion and salvation of their peoples. At first there were two: the Kingdom of New Spain, broadly the Mexico of the Aztecs with the almost empty Northwest to Vancouver; and the Kingdom of Peru, realm of the Incas, south into North Argentina and Chile, east to the sources of the Amazon, north beyond Quito to South Colombia. As far as possible, Spain took over the administrative forms of these two Indian empires. Later the lands between them and to the south, whose native populations had been less culturally advanced, developed and formed a third and a fourth kingdom. One was New Granada (now Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador) with its head high in the Andes at Santa Fe de Bogotá, and its mailed fist, the great sea-citadel of Cartagena. The youngest kingdom (1778), the poorest in metal and the most remote, was

las provincias del Rio de la Plata (now Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia) whose capital, Buenos Aires, until the middle nineteenth century was a town of even less splendor than Caracas. Before 1800, the population of these vast realms reached eighteen million, over six times that of the Thirteen Colonies of Britain, and their proportionate wealth was even greater. Their annual product of gold and silver averaged sixty-four million gold pesos; their legal import and export (exclusively through Spain) approximated fifty-five million and twenty-four million pesos; but before the eighteenth century was gone, their contraband trade, primarily with England, was at least twice as great as the legal business with Spain. This was the economic imbalance which Miranda was sure he could correct in London, as he might solve a problem of engineering. No richer empire than Spain's had been known to western man, yet by economic fact it was not Spain's at all; it belonged, Miranda saw, to the Americans who owned the land and who, when free, would normally do business with the northern industrial and commercial powers.

As early as 1783 (the year of Bolivar's birth), the Count of Aranda, Minister of State to Carlos III of Spain, saw the danger of the unbalanced empire and proposed that the Monarch send his sons as kings to the four kingdoms. The suggestion seemed outrageous to the Bourbon standard of the central state. A generation later, the more flexible, more politically knowing Portuguese followed what Spain had spurned. In 1807, Napoleon, now emperor, compelled the consent of Carlos IV of Spain to move his troops through Spain to Portugal. The Portuguese King and all his family, as the French marched in, sailed out of Lisbon harbor bound for Rio de Janeiro. Thus, the royal house of Bragança held the Portuguese realms together until 1889, when with banners and music the Brazilians bade farewell to their Emperor Dom Pedro II, and modulated into a republic. Such moderate means were alien to the Spaniards.

A year after his appeasement of Napoleon, Carlos IV was compelled by his own army to abdicate in favor of his son,

Fernando VII; then Napoleon forced them both to renounce the throne and made them prisoners in France. Now, Miranda thought, surely his hour had come; with France possessing Spain and threatening her realms, Britain would not hesitate. He sent word to all the capitals of America Hispana to stand by (every revolutionary on the Hispanic continent had gone to school to him in London). Sir Arthur Wellesley, soon to be Lord Wellington, encouraged him. And again, the veteran rationalist erred in his premise. Before Napoleon with an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men had crossed the Pyrenees to place his brother Joseph on Spain's throne, the Spaniards were rising. Spain at once became England's ally against France, and of course all British schemes against Spain's realms were canceled. A supreme Junta in Seville (later, on an island) set up a Council of Regency until the legitimate King, Fernando VII, could return; it organized war on France; it sent envoys with the good news to America: henceforth, all the realms would be integrally Spain, all Spanish-Americans full citizens with equal representation in the national Cortes. The reforms came too late; the American capitals had already risen — and without Miranda.

Quito and Chuquisaca, gems within the snows and volcanoes of the equatorial Andes, were the first to revolt.⁷ In less than a year, with no communication, simultaneously because moved by the same long-latent forces, Caracas (April, 1810), Buenos Aires (May), Bogotá (June), Mexico and Chile (September) — thousands upon thousands of almost impenetrable miles apart — threw out their Spanish bureaucrats, clung for a little while to the fiction of allegiance to Fernando VII, and soon declared themselves republics.

In the same year, Bolivar met Miranda. He was one of the delegation of three sent to London by the new government in Caracas to barter financial and diplomatic aid for unlimited commercial rights. At first, on his return from Europe early in 1807, Bolivar's oath on the Roman hill had seemed forgotten. Simon Bolivar cultivated his estates, sent his produce to mar-

⁷ Quito is the capital of Ecuador. Chuquisaca, renamed Sucre, is one of the two principal cities of Bolivia.

ket; his most serious battle was with a neighbor in the valley of El Tuy, who disputed his right of way for the transport of his indigo. The slaves of the two houses came to blows, and Dr. Nicolas Briceño wanted to fight it out with Bolivar in the same noble, archaic fashion. Simon Bolivar demurred, and like a respectable landlord, threatened litigation.

He was made Justice of the Peace for San Mateo; and this also occasioned a skirmish. It was the custom for newly appointed American officers of the King, whatever the distance and inconvenience, to come to Caracas to be sworn. Simon was too busy, and despatched his lawyer with power of attorney. The royal court insisted on a personal appearance. Simon Bolivar refused to come, and challenged the demand as "abusive and embarrassing . . . based on no principle but the arbitrariness of the top men [the Spaniards] and the servility of the creoles." The new Captain General of Venezuela, Vicente de Emparán, fresh from Spain, gauged the young man as difficult but not dangerous. They became friends. At a convivial stag dinner in Caracas, Bolivar got to his feet with a toast to American independence. Emparán, who was present, smiled the jest away. A conspiracy was discovered. The Captain General mildly chastised Bolivar, who was involved, by banishing him for a few weeks to his land in San Mateo. He asked the Marquis of Casa León to have a talk with the dear young man, lest he go too far in this fashionable game of revolt. Simon Bolivar listened in respectful silence, then replied: "Extremely well said, Marquis. But we have declared war on Spain, and shall see what we shall see." Simon Bolivar was peacefully at San Mateo on April 19, 1810, when the more active citizens of Caracas stormed the Captain General's palace, dragged Emparán to the Cabildo and forced him to resign.

For these years, there are several portraits and miniatures of Bolivar. They are by competent artists; yet they seem to portray brothers with very different natures, and with a mere family resemblance. One is of a worldling, fastidious and self-indulgent; one is of a poet. Two date from 1810 and London; in the first, the painter, Charles Gill, sees a kind of Alfred de

Musset, hero of an American *Confessions d'un enfant du siècle* or perhaps a true son of Simon's father, the pleasure-loving Juan Vicente; but in the other, almost precisely contemporary, the man seen is cool and composed: the visionary eyes under arched brows that meet, the exquisite nostrils, the mobile mouth, have been transformed in a synthesis that recalls the powerful Juan de Bolívar, Captain General of Venezuela.

Keats, reflecting on the universal traits of Shakespeare, said that genius has no character. The character of Shakespeare was the plays in which a vast, confused diversity is organized by creative will. Genius is an integration of conflicting energies; the more immense their discordance, the greater the genius that unites them. When the four Bolívar children played under the portraits of their forebears, their several temperaments mirrored diverse individual traits of the faces on the wall. In Juan Vincerte and the gentle Juana,⁸ the father was dominant; in María Antonia, ruled the masterful grandfather Juan de Bolívar and the mother, the biblical "woman of virtue." In Simon, all the traits of all these men and women rushed painfully, chaotically together; and the creative will, which is genius, had not yet fused them.

The London mission failed; England was not committing herself against Spain, her new ally in the war with Napoleon's France. But Bolivar profited by his experience of England, and never forgot the lesson of a parliamentary régime stabilized by a permanent Presider. Miranda showed him the sights, introduced him to his friends. What the sixty-year-old man thought of Simon Bolivar is not on record. Perhaps he was puzzled, certainly he was not impressed, by the impeccably groomed young aristocrat whose upper lip was too soft, whose lower lip was too thrusting, whose nose was too long and whose eyes heavily brooded. There is no doubt of what Simon Bolivar thought of Miranda. He accepted his grandiose program for Colombia; he accepted his blueprint of a rational society based on Locke and Rousseau; he revered the great old man.

⁸ The family called her Juanica. Another girl had died in early childhood.

And although at twenty-seven he was not yet Bolivar, with a simple question he cut through Miranda's forty years' long-range planning, and revolutionized his life.

"Why," the young man asked, "not come home with us?"

Miranda agreed.

They sailed on different vessels, in order that Miranda, open enemy of Fernando VII, should not compromise the delegation which was still formally loyal. December 11, 1810, Miranda stepped from the British passenger ship *Avon* on to the wharf of La Guaira.

E A R T H Q U A K E

MIRANDA sat in the first Venezuelan Congress, a conclave of settled men, men of years, wealth and learning (only Coro, Maracaibo and Guayana, solid royalist provinces, failed to send delegates). While they argued, in another part of town the young radicals (among them Simon Bolivar) met in the *Sociedad Patriótica*, a club modeled from those of revolutionary Paris; and exhorted the Congress to declare the country free.

Miranda was not popular. The town fathers had received him at La Guaira with the respect due his great name; they had made him Lieutenant General of a nonexistent army; but they found him cold and strange. They knew they were not the equals of the mighty men with whom he had consorted in Europe and the United States; this did not make them more comfortable in his presence. Miranda, alone, often attended the stormy sessions of the *Sociedad Patriótica*: the "rash group" that had gone so far as to admit women and men of color to their meetings! He heard Simon Bolivar make his first speech:

"What does it matter to us," Bolivar cried, "whether Spain sells her slaves to Bonaparte or keeps them for herself — if we are resolved to be free? Our hesitations are the sad effect of ancient chains. They tell us: Great projects must be prepared in calm. Three hundred years of calm are not enough?"

The pressure of the Society forced the Congress to act. The

vote for independence (July 5, 1811) was unanimous except for the voice of a priest, Juan Vicente Maya, a delegate from the Andes of La Grita, who refrained on ethical grounds. The delegates, he declared, and it was true, had been chosen on the basis of the revolution of April, 1810, which set up home rule but carefully asserted loyalty to Fernando VII: how then could these delegates deny the premise of their mandate? The good priest's scruples were respectfully heard, and ignored. In all the houses of Caracas there was rejoicing, and to the clangor of church bells the servants and slaves danced in the narrow streets and the broad plazas.

Now trouble began. The new Constitution called for an Executive of three, who lacked power over the centrifugal provinces. It was worse, far worse, Miranda grumbled, than the North American Constitution; even the principle of nationality was left vague: the document stated its willingness to change "at the command of the Colombian people who might choose to confederate in a greater body." Miranda wanted a single strong Executive, and a moratorium of vague liberal ideals. Bolivar was one of his few supporters.

At once, the claim of the Congress to represent a nation was disputed. The humble farmers, the pardos and mestizos, had not voted. Down from the fertile heights south of Caracas they came to rout the patriots as "traitors, rebels, heretics." Valencia, the nation's second city, hurled an army against the Republic; in the first battle eight hundred patriots were killed, fifteen hundred wounded. Coro, Maracaibo and Guayana declared for Spain. Domingo de Monteverde, a Spanish naval captain, landed at Coro with five hundred Spaniards, and Juan de los Reyes Vargas, a powerful Indian chief, joined him with all his men. They advanced inland. Far to the south on the Orinoco, the national militia was destroyed by royalist Venezuelans whose captain in 1806 had marched against Miranda in Coro. Republican Caracas was surrounded. . . .

The January sun makes the air of Caracas subtly strong, like the driest wines of Spain. The stone height of the Avila gleams

over the fummy chrysopraxe of trees; and softer than the sky's sapphire are the tiled roofs. One day of January, 1812, Dr. Alejandro Echazurría, the University professor of chemistry and physics, was demonstrating to his students the electrical machine he had built. To work, he explained, it needed electricity from the air, and there was none. "It must have gone into the ground," he said; "which means there is danger of an earthquake."

That a science teacher in Caracas should think of earthquakes was not surprising; these volcanic lands have shocks severe enough to be remembered, every generation. And that an electrical machine was set up in a university whose crested turrets not long before presided over the prayer and plainsong of nuns, was a symptom of the ferment which for a half-century had lifted Venezuela, once mediocre and static. In its first days, the university had had a professor-priest, Baltasar de los Reyes, who attacked Scholasticism and taught Descartes. He was expelled — and replaced by Antonio Pimental, who continued the same lessons. Priests in the Orinoco jungle were studying the Indian tongues; in the Venezuelan Andes, the folk were composing songs, producing original dramas. Alexander von Humboldt found a man experimenting with electricity in Calabozo, a crude cattle town far to the south of Caracas. The village intellectuals were reading Voltaire, Condillac, Berney, Locke, Chaptal, Lavoisier, Fourcoy's Chemistry, Gerardier's Botany, Buisson and Nollat's Physics. Agricultural technics (again Humboldt is the witness) advanced suddenly beyond those of Mexico and Peru (where they had decayed since the Aztecs and Incas). The standard of living of the folk in the happy valleys of Aragua and El Tuy (Humboldt tells us) was higher than that of the peasants of Germany, Poland, or even France. A school of composers in Caracas (their master was Juan Manuel Olivares) compared favorably with the musicians of Italy, Spain, Vienna.

It was Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter, when the King of Spain must wash the feet of the poor in his Palace. The devout in Caracas wondered if the false King Joseph

Bonaparte would mock the sacred rite; and if he did, what might God do? For the season, it was unusually warm. The air lost its winy dryness, great globules of dew began to fall. Thousands were in church, when the earth parted.

Not in all the cities of Venezuela did the face of the Lord roar and writhe with equal fury. Coro, Maracaibo, Valencia, Angostura, were spared: they were the *royalist* centers. Only Caracas, La Guaira, San Felipe, Barquisimeto, Mérida, lay in shards — the cities where the republicans were strong! Twenty thousand were dead; ten thousand in Caracas, and of these, almost half beneath the shattered churches in which *Te Deums* had been sung to the Republic. In one plaza stood a gallows for traitors to the new nation; part of the façade of a church had been flung across and crushed the gibbet. Among the ruins of the church of Las Mercedes only one column stood; it was carved with the seal of the true King. Miracles! cried the clergy, God's Word in this whirlwind earth, calling to repentance the impious who denied His anointed Monarch. A few priests interpreted differently: God's wrath had fallen, they said, as punishment to the Spaniards who built the churches. These dissenters were overwhelmed by the majority and by the Archbishop. The humble, the pardos and mestizos, found voice, beating their breasts among the ruins, cursing the heretics who had misled them.

Among those who wandered through the stricken streets were two young men. One, José Domingo Díaz, a mestizo, was soon to be the leading journalist . . . brilliant, unscrupulous, bitter . . . on the King's side. The other, whom by chance he watched this day, was Simon Bolivar. They were near the heaped stones of a church in which the sullen crowd searched for their dead. Bolivar looked on quietly, and then spoke to Díaz: "If Nature is against us, we shall fight Nature, and make it obey." A monk climbed to the half-ruined altar, open to the sky, crazily propped by broken pillars. He lifted his hands above the people until they set down their sad burdens. He cried: "This is the Lord's chastisement of the ungrateful city which has dared to rise against that good father, that Christian

philosopher, that most beloved of monarchs, Don Fernando." The crowd murmured assent, and the monk saw the man in the uniform of the Republic. He cursed him, exhorted the folk to take unto itself the vengeance of God upon God's enemies — and his finger pointed at Bolivar. While the people's sorrow hardened into wrath, Bolivar stood still: if he remained, he would be struck down; if he tried to avoid trouble and slipped away, the mob would be at him like hounds. There was but one safe way. He unsheathed his sword, strode through the bitter faces, mounted the altar, and with the flat of his sword struck down the monk. The folk saw in wonder, and silently dispersed. This incident is vouchèd for by Bolivar's enemy, Díaz.

Bolivar's challenge of "Nature," false rhetoric, was true as sheer emotion. "Nature" had taken his parents; had taken his wife; now in August of this past year it had taken his elder brother, the mild, temperamentally remote Juan Vicente. (But that they were fond . . . that Juan Vicente perhaps intuitively sensed his brother's power, is suggested by the fact that in 1810 he had proposed Simon to lead the revolution — a proposal courteously ignored.) Juan Vicente had never cared to go to Europe; had lived in conjugal peace with a woman whom the King's disapproval prevented him from marrying; he wanted a "loyalist" revolution, not complete independence like Simon. He had been sent with Telesforo Orea to Washington to win the recognition and to purchase arms of the North American Republic. The mission failed.⁹ On his return home, the ship

⁹ Secretary of State James Monroe wrote to his agent in Caracas, six months after Juan Vicente Bolívar and Orea presented their credentials: "A principal motive for delaying the full recognition of the independence of the Government of Venezuela is the desire to prove up to what point these Provinces are fit to sustain it; by which is meant the preparation of the people, its union and decision to be free. If the people is resolved to maintain its independence, its success appears inevitable. The United States has a sincere interest, because of the sentiment of generosity and also because it is convinced independence will be in many respects mutually advantageous. France favors it and Great Britain will not oppose it long, even if it is now adverse through force or fearing war. Nevertheless, nothing would be more absurd for the United States than a formal recognition (of independence), so long as it is not evident that the people themselves are decided and able to sustain it. Were a counter-revolution to occur after the recognition, the United States would suffer grave prejudice without having helped at all." *Translation from the Spanish translation of the original in Boletín No. 72 of the Academia Nacional de Historia de Venezuela.*

went down in a storm off the Bermudas, Juan Vicente was lost, and Simon was the head of the Bolivars. His elder brother's death, the earthquake . . . always ambivalent fate depriving and vaguely foreshadowing a design. . . .

The Congress commanded the Archbishop to issue a paper explaining that earthquakes were not political. The prelate promised, delayed (a modulation of three centuries of *obede-zco, pero no cumpro*); at last wrote a letter to his flock, so subtly metaphysical and subversive that the Congress dared not use it. The people's turmoil rose; Congress conceded extraordinary powers to the Executive of three; and on the same day the Spaniard Monteverde, his force swollen with recruits from the land, entered the ruins of Barquisimeto. Three weeks later he whipped the patriots at San Carlos and was half-way to Caracas. The Executive decreed "death to all traitors and opponents of our government" and named Miranda Generalissimo of the army.

The patriots had not chosen Miranda as one of the Executive (he was glad, he said, that his country had so many eminent men it did not need him). They were learning that economic chaos feeds on divided authority. Miranda was arrogant, doctrinaire, aloof; but he had led a French army and helped George Washington, that legendary hero. The Executive named him Dictator. Many of the fathers of the revolution of 1810, faithful to their liberal ideas, resigned their posts rather than serve; they wanted civil rule, even if the alternative were no government at all. Bolivar was with Miranda on the question of unified command; but the old man was proving himself a weak and too deliberate soldier.

Less than a hundred miles west of Caracas, north of Valencia through a great gorge, was Puerto Cabello and its mighty castle of San Felipe, a key of defense for the whole country. Miranda placed Bolivar in command of the fortress and the town, and the young Colonel (he had begun the campaign as a lieutenant) reluctantly accepted. Monteverde had taken nearby Valencia; only a vigorous offensive could dislodge him, and

Bolívar in his new post must passively watch and wait for Miranda.

Miranda with his army of five thousand had advanced toward Valencia and been beaten back. He camped at La Victoria, halfway between Valencia and Caracas, and began to train his troops by European standards. Meanwhile the garrisons in many towns mutinied and joined the Spaniard, Monteverde. In the great plains between the coastal mountains and the Orinoco, Spanish officers (the most notorious was Antioñanza) led bands of outlaws and slaves to sack, burn, rape and murder, in the name of the King. Even in towns due south of the capital, the royal pennant flew again. Monteverde also waited. The immediate ports, Puerto Cabello and La Guaira, were not his; but troops and munitions could come through Coro and Maracaibo. Miranda waited, until these royalist ports and indeed the whole country "came to their senses," and until his assortment of artisans and farmers could be transformed into soldiers. Both leaders felt insecure and in an alien land. Monteverde, faithful plodding Spanish sailor, took for granted that the insurgents against the King were mad. They bewildered him, the crude passionate people! Even their Spanish was hard to understand; they swallowed their consonants and their speech flowed like birdsong rather than muscular Castilian. Miranda's Venezuela had been inside his head for forty years. He was remote from his soldiers; he failed to see how they could ever equal the trained men of Prussia, France, England and Spain. Even with the leaders who at last had chosen him to lead them, he felt uncomfortable. He waited. After all, the crucial ports, Puerto Cabello and La Guaira, were safe. . . .

On July 5, 1812, the first anniversary of Venezuela's independence, a note was handed to him. It was dated July 1, Puerto Cabello.

Señor General Francisco Miranda.

General:

An officer unworthy the name Venezuelan has taken possession of the Castle of San Felipe and at this moment is bombarding the city.

If your excellency does not at once attack the enemy from the rear, the place is lost. I shall hold it as long as I can.

SIMON BOLIVAR

As far as Miranda knew, the port was not yet lost; no conjunction had yet been made between the royalists in Valencia and Puerto Cabello. An audacious soldier would at once have challenged Monteverde whose force was smaller, attacked the fort from the rear, and perhaps made victory out of peril. Miranda leaped to the conviction of failure. "*Vénézuela est blessée au cœur!*" he cried; his use of a foreign language was a symbol. "We were safe, now all is lost. Monteverde had no powder, lead or guns. Now he has forty thousand pounds of powder, lead in abundance, three thousand muskets." Miranda was arguing victory for the Spaniards!

The Castle of San Felipe, entrusted to Bolivar, commanded the harbor and, beyond a narrow channel, the town of Puerto Cabello. Stately houses gave the city strength and shutness. One plaza faced the waterway, and ships unloaded straight into the street. Like all the fortresses of Spain, it had the form of a crown, with patios in series opening into dark vaulted cells, and a wide roof reached by an incline of stone which horses and artillery wagons could ascend. This was turreted, bristling with guns, and commanded the patios, the city and the harbor. In the cells, when Bolivar took command, were Spanish soldiers, captured in the first days of the revolution. Their number made them an uneasy burden, and cautious friends had warned Bolivar. If he had been Antoñanza, he would have killed them; short of that, where could he send them? On June 30, Bolivar turned the fort over to his ranking officer, Lieutenant Vinoni, and went to inspect the town. As soon as he was gone, Vinoni released the Spaniards, raised the flag of Spain. Sailors and soldiers who had been won to the King's cause rushed from the city to the fort, and Bolivar found himself, with a handful of men, shut out from his Castle and raked by fire. He disposed his men as best he could, sent his message to Miranda, and waited. On July 4, instead of Miranda, a detach-

ment of royalists from Coro marched in by land. On July 6, Bolivar was reduced to forty men. With five officers and three privates, he stole by night out of the harbor and sailed for La Guaira.

The Archbishop of Caracas threw off his submissive mask and openly exhorted his flock to return to the King. Miranda ordered his arrest; no one dared obey. Now from the east came dread news; the slaves, captained by Spaniards, were marching on the capital. Miranda's advisers were not young men like Bolivar, but the bewildered Executive who had given up. They urged him to quit: the slaves were the worst enemy; "without the effective help of at least one European power, we can do nothing," said the cautious lawyer, Miguel José Sanz (he had been Bolivar's boyhood mentor). The Marquis of Casa León was already in touch with Monteverde. Miranda looked to the north, the south, the west, the east, and found no hope. He sent his emissaries to the Spaniard, asking honorable terms. In the village of San Mateo, near Bolivar's ancestral home, he surrendered Venezuela's army.

Historians have argued the meaning of Miranda's capitulation. The key is the man. On his return to Caracas, he was older and more tired than his robust frame and his proud eyes revealed: too old to meet that most treacherous foe, disorder. Miranda was a cold man, and the heats of Venezuela confused him. This was not *his* "New World"; the Europe of Locke and Voltaire and Mirabeau to him was newer; desert and jungle should submit to it, to be made over. That this wilderness could be creative, that he must first embrace it, was not his premise. He was not conscious enough of his land to love it. And what collided with him shattered his rigid habits. He was a well-ordered man — now plunged in incoherence; a man used to dealing with European leaders whose words were insincere but whose acts followed a will concise, cruelly concise; and here he faced men passionately sincere in every word they spoke, although the next word was its contradiction, and whose wills lurched, divided, ricocheted from piety to ferocity, from one

loyalty to its antithesis. The Orinoco and the Forest were in them, with a thousand years of Europe; eighteenth-century rationalism had for forty years stamped Miranda; shallowed him and stamped him. War, to him, was a variant of the rules that had built Potsdam, written the pages of Montesquieu. Here men fought without science or art. In the program he had presented to Pitt, he had provided for the "Tories," the native opponents of free Colombia: they would be shipped to the interior or deported. No unnecessary bloodshed! In Caracas, he had been forced to accept the firing squad and the gibbet. In Paris, he had hated Marat, Robespierre, Danton; at least they had been logical wolves. No: this was not *the method* for freeing America, this lawless scrimmage with a Spanish sailor, while marauders ranged and slaves rebelled. The method was England, France, the United States . . . parleys and bargains for power and for trade over the courteous green table.

With his love for negotiation had grown his distaste for soldiering — that profession and sport of his youth. How could an aging statesman suddenly become a good fighting general in a chaotic country when not only his legs, when his brains, rejected the crude method for convincing?

In the first months after his return, probably Miranda did not know what was happening within him. He lacked respect for his associates; of his officers he said, "Let them learn to shoulder arms before they presume to command"; of his fellow statesmen he said nothing, recalling his friends in London. He did not know that these provincials were sensitive, and felt his contempt: the chasm grew between them. When the scene darkened, distrust grew. When Puerto Cabello was betrayed, the unconscious process of his thoughts burst into a conscious plan: he would start again, playing his lone hand which now had power, with the Chancelleries of Europe. Let Venezuela get over the trauma of the earthquake: let her *train troops*; he meantime, having got free of the land through a capitulation which was nothing but an armistice, would parley in the places of decision. He would go to his friend Antonio Nariño, re-

leased from prison in New Granada by the revolution; and with London, Paris, Washington. . . .

The terms of the surrender were good. Monteverde agreed that no one be punished or discriminated against for his acts or his political opinions; that all who wished have passports; that Venezuela's ships be free; that the liberal constitution recently written in Cadiz apply as promised, and at once, to all Americans.

Miranda's reasoning at least might be debated. The tragic flaw was that he consulted almost no one. The motive for capitulation and for beginning anew outside the country was of course his lack of confidence in the Venezuelans; it was also his motive for not confiding in them. He did not respect them; how could he hope they would approve a plan based on his want of respect? They would merely get in his way. Better to move circuitous and alone: the method of the old intriguer.

The result was disastrous. Suddenly the patriots — soldiers, officers, men and women of the cities and the farms — learned that their chief had surrendered his army of five thousand to Monteverde's four thousand. Out of bewilderment and loss came rage; from rage, the cry of Treachery! Treason!

Monteverde moved into Caracas and at once broke all the promises he had signed so lightly because he did not intend to keep them. Republicans were imprisoned and shot, properties were seized, the port of La Guaira was closed, no one could leave. To injury the Spaniard added insult of sophistication. He had agreed to punish no one for his political opinion? This held to the moment of *signing*, but what of *the moment after*? what if the heretics and traitors continued to think? For this, *now*, they should be punished. He had promised to enforce the Constitution of Cadiz? It gave no rights of citizenship to *criminals*; Venezuelans were criminals; *ergo*. . . .

Miranda had suspected Monteverde's treachery, and this distrust, by cruel irony, led him to an action which enflamed the patriots still more against him. Fearing he would be seized as the prize traitor to the King, he had made secret plans to escape. His papers were on board a British vessel and he was

in La Guaira ready to steal away, before the port could be closed. He carried one thousand ounces of gold, given him by Casa León from the national funds. The gold of course could be legitimately spent when the revolution was renewed; but to the angry officers who knew nothing of Miranda's plans, the picture of treason and corruption was now perfect.

Among the men in La Guaira was Bolivar, and none more furious.¹⁰ Bolivar wanted Miranda shot, and offered to shoot him. The Commandant of the port, Manuel María Las Casas, persuaded him that it was wiser to arrest and court-martial the General. Las Casas had secretly switched to the royalists and was taking orders from Monteverde. Another of Bolivar's group was Miguel Peña, Civil Governor of the town; he had just come from a friendly talk with Monteverde. A third was a rich merchant, Francisco Iturbe, who for years had done business for the Bolivars, and was ready to obey the law, whoever wielded it. Simon Bolivar was in a whirlpool of ignorance and dark cross purposes. He assumed these traitors loyal to the Republic; he was sure the loyal Miranda was a traitor.

At midnight, twelve of the young officers, including Bolivar, knocked at the door of the room where Miranda was sleeping, and told him he was under arrest. The old man, on his bed, looked up at the stern faces and muttered: "Rowdies! All you officers are good for is rows." Then he dressed and quietly went with them. Las Casas led them straight into the hands of Monteverde.

Like many others, Bolivar had hoped to escape from La Guaira. He had prevented Miranda from escaping. Now he also was trapped.

Monteverde was in good humor. Everything had gone his way. He had the rebel army; he had Caracas; he had Miranda. He ordered him thrust into chains and carried at once to the vaults of San Felipe. The other officers were brought to him. He would show these madmen he could be generous; after all, he had to thank them for Miranda.

¹⁰ In his excellent study, *Miranda*, Mariano Picón-Salas suggests that Bolivar transferred his own confusions upon Miranda.

Francisco Iturbe emphatically clasped Bolivar's arm: "Here, sir, is the former Commandant of San Felipe and Puerto Cabello, Colonel Simon Bolivar. I remind you, sir, of my guaranty for him. If he suffers, I suffer; my life vouches for his."

"Good!" said Monteverde, and turned to his adjutant. "This gentleman receives his passport to leave the country, in recompense for his service to the King in the arrest of General Miranda."

Since the trap closed on him, Bolivar had been silent, waiting for light in the phantasmagoric darkness. He said:

"I helped arrest General Miranda in order to punish a traitor to my country, not to serve Spain."

Monteverde turned pale. Iturbe broke in:

"Pay no attention to the hothead! Give him his papers and let him go."

Bolivar got his passport.

DEATH OF A PRECURSOR

THE FOUR YEARS remaining to Miranda were a macabre dumb-show to mock the man who had faith in the power of Europe's reason to establish freedom and justice in America. Along with other victims of Monteverde's broken promises the sixty-two-year-old man was carried in chains to the Castle of San Felipe, scene of Simon Bolivar's first humiliation. "Some arrive manacled hand and foot, bound like saddlebags to the beasts; some are dragged like sacks on the ground" . . . with such words, Miranda smuggled appeals from his cell to the Cortes in Spain and to friends — powerful ones: Nicholas Vansittart and Lord Castlereagh in London. But what could England do? She was now the ally of Spain's legitimate King against Napoleon. When the Spaniards and the British drove Napoleon out, and the true King came home, what did he do? This father and saint of his humble American folk wiped out the Cadiz Constitution, abjured the liberalism of his predecessors, re-estab-

lished the Inquisition, replaced laws with chains. "*Vivan las cadenas!*"¹¹ Miranda in chains was removed to Morro Castle in Puerto Rico (his presence in Venezuela was a danger); then to the island prison in the harbor of Cadiz, within sight of the place where the Cortes had written Europe's most liberal constitution. Only when a paralytic stroke, scurvy and typhoid fever, had weakened him beyond the threat of escape, were his iron shackles removed. His jailors saw he was near death, and sent him a priest. The old free-thinker drove him away: "Let me die in peace." But Fernando's Spain had the last word. On July 14, 1816 (Bastille Day in France), Miranda lay dying; conscious but unable to protest, he watched the nuns and padres invade his cell to administer extreme unction.

Miranda knew in his last years the rise of Simon Bolivar; it must have corresponded with his slight respect for his countrymen. Miranda had a memory of the young man. He had heard Bolivar's fiery speech at the *Sociedad Patriótica*; he had watched him when he lost his first responsible command, the fortress at Puerto Cabello, through the treachery of a fellow Venezuelan. Perhaps the Colonel had not been vigilant enough: that was difficult to judge. Better soldiers had lost battles and campaigns. The unpardonable was what followed.

Miranda had received two letters . . .

Caracas, July 12, 1812

General,

With my physical and moral strength exhausted, where shall I find the courage to describe to you the loss . . . my loss of Puerto Cabello? The blow has destroyed my heart more than the heart of the Province. The Province may hope that health and freedom will rise again from the ruins that remain; for nothing is more certain than that our people love their country's cause and detest the tyranny of Spain. Despite the cowardice which the citizens of the town displayed in the last hours, I can assure you that their sentiments have not changed. They thought our cause lost, because their army was so far away. . . .

I await your orders for the disposition of the officers who came

¹¹ "Long live chains!"

with me; they are excellent men; none better. I think, in Venezuela. The loss of Colonel Jalon is irreparable; he alone was worth an army.

General, my spirits are so low I am incapable of commanding a single soldier. Conceit made me believe the will to win and love of country could take the place of talent for command—a talent I totally lack. I pray you, either place me under the lowest officer or give me a few days to recover my peace of mind, lost in the loss of Puerto Cabello. To this, I add the state of my health. Thirteen sleepless nights and worry have brought me to a mortal collapse. I shall at once begin my detailed report of the operation of the troops I commanded and of the disaster . . . in order to justify you in having given me that post, and to save my honor. General, I did my duty; and if one soldier had remained, with him I would have gone on facing the enemy. It was not my fault that they deserted; I had nothing left to hold them with, for the salvation of the fatherland. Nevertheless, in my hands it was lost!

SIMON BOLIVAR

And two days later:

General,

It is with a kind of shame that I send you the enclosed report, which is scarcely a shadow of what really happened. My head, my heart, are useless. I beseech you, give me a few days' respite to see if I can recover my normal spirit. Having lost the last and best armed fortress of the State, General, how can I help being out of my mind?

I beg of you, do not oblige me to face you in person. I am not guilty; but I have been unlucky, and that is enough.

With deepest regard and respect, your devoted servant and friend

SIMON BOLIVAR

When he read these missives, Miranda's thin lips must have curled. Soldiers in defeat did not whimper! the fellow needed a nurse, not a command. And this spoiled child, an officer begging for furlough in battle, pleading to be placed "below the lowest officer," had presumed to judge *him!* to turn Miranda over to the Spaniards!

Simon Bolivar, when he wrote these words, was twenty-nine; but he was not yet Bolivar. Miranda must have been prophet and poet to see more in him than the hysteria of insecurity and rashness.

BIRTH OF BOLIVAR

WHEN Simon Bolivar accepted the humiliating passport of the Spaniard, which allowed him to leave his country, he knew where he wanted to go. Seven hundred and fifty miles west of La Guaira lay Cartagena, the great walled sea-citadel of the Kingdom of New Granada. The patriots held it, with all the South where Antonio Nariño presided in Bogotá, and much of the North, except rabidly royalist Panama and Santa Marta. Simon hoped to offer his humble services to the men of Cartagena, although they were federalists and his convictions favored the centralist rule of Nariño.

But travel in those days was devious and slow . . . like the creative process. Had Simon Bolivar been able to fly in three hours to his destination, he still would not have been Bolivar when he got there.

His sloop would carry him only as far as Curaçao, the Dutch island (at the moment held by the British) forty miles off the coast of Venezuela and a hundred miles west of La Guaira. For days, the slight vessel ploughed the mist and the rains that fused the firmaments together, with brief fierce moments of sun glazing the sea. Bolivar's mood was fury and tumultuous self-doubt, shrieking and straining for action but clamped by the endless voyage. His passions, unable to leap, were forced to contemplate. The debacle of the Republic, which *his* loss of Puerto Cabello had abetted, the "treason" of Miranda and of half his comrades, struck him like a trauma. His hyperaesthetic nature needed to react, and he was pinioned to his slow skiff, to the interminable cycle of rain and heat and hours. Heretofore his contradictory traits had been able to burst into fragmentary deeds, isolate, each imperious while it lasted. The young man had revealed glimpses of intuition, method, intelligent analysis, visionary fervor — and their obfuscation. Now the forge of pain made his powers organic. The intense forced pause gripped the energy of each impulse, fused it with the others — as when steel is born in a hearth furnace. Whereas each impulse in turn had overwhelmed him, now *he* contained

them all, and this gave him detachment: the matrix of creative power. No other process within the limits of psychology can explain the transfigured man who, without trace of his fumbings, futile passions, intemperate judgments in Puerto Cabello and La Guaira, leaped ashore at Curaçao.

On September 2, 1812, the *Celoso* glided between the forts of the Schottegat into Willemstad harbor, snug and narrow as a Holland street. On both sides the sedate Dutch houses, cool and prim, peered down on the skiff; and beyond their bourgeois backs rose the turgid verdure of the tropic island. At the quai waited the crowd of whites and blacks, voluble in *Papiamento*, Curaçao's specific jargon of mixed Dutch, Spanish and African. Other vessels had already come in with Venezuelan refugees: exciting times for the phlegmatic Hollanders who absorbed, without mingling, the Jews and Negroes. As the British customs officers stepped forward, they saw a young Venezuelan soldier, tense but calm, cadaverously lean, leap from the gunwale. He was a short man, under five-foot-seven . . . very short against the Englishmen; but they looked into his eyes, and he seemed tall to them.

Bolivar had placed on board all the cash he could collect and several chests of silver plate, which he intended to sell, to help him get to Cartagena; he knew that, with Monteverde confiscating the lands of the patriots, he would be short of credit. The British promptly attached his money and his chests (he never got them back). Their pretext was in tune with the piratical Caribbean: Bolivar's goods had been in the same house at one time with Miranda's, Miranda was a prisoner of Spain, Spain was an ally of England, *ergo* Bolivar's goods were suspect. Alternate reason: the sloop *Celoso* which Bolivar had chartered in La Guaira owed a debt in Puerto Cabello which Bolivar had once commanded, therefore he must pay it. Bolivar found himself penniless in Curaçao.

Before the sun set, he was in touch with a wealthy physician of the town, the Dutch Sephardic Jew, Mordecai Ricardo, and had convinced him that, whatever the chances of Venezuela's independence (this was Bolivar's argument for a loan), the

man Simon Bolivar was a good risk. Bolivar sent a secret order to Iturbe, his business friend in La Guaira, to realize what he could on his estates before they were seized by the probably not prompt hand of Monteverde. His letter to Iturbe, unlike the recent ones to Miranda, breathed clarity and confidence:

. . . it is true, they have iniquitously robbed me of my little money and all my baggage, but I am whole of heart for I know that when misfortune tags a man, everything falls in against him. A brave man must be impervious to bad luck. I am armed with constancy and look on with disdain. Nothing rules my heart except conscience. . . .

Making these two thrusts for money, one of which might succeed, Bolivar was already the tactician.

Dr. Ricardo asked him how much he needed, and opened his coffers. Without waiting to hear from Iturbe, before the end of October, Bolivar had gathered a few refugee fellow officers and was on his way . . . a second long meditative journey . . . to Cartagena.

I V

The Civil Wars

"Audacity in plan, prudence in execution."

NEW GRANADA

CARTAGENA DE INDIAS, the stronghold, was a city of fear. Fear built the walls sixty feet high, forty feet thick, studded with ramparts and stone sentry boxes, with dungeons below. Fear built the fortlike churches, the stone houses whose balconies nearly touch across the streets and whose patios, stone-staired, stone-columned, are shut by brass-ribbed doors of oak. Fear placed the convent on La Popa, a sudden hill precipitous to the sea: when pirates came, the nuns could plunge from their windows to chaste death. Above the marsh and the walled town — even above the forts circling the harbor and the thrusts of land shaped like the claws of a crab (the Indian village was called Calamari, crab in Chibcha) — fear chose the site of the Castle, San Felipe. The sun is hot over Cartagena, but the trade winds temper it with the foam of the sea; in street, patio, church, the sheltered shadows remain cool. The armored city crouches in fear, and the fear is cold grey stone.

Felipe II ordered the castle built. His engineers of Seville drew the plans, and in twenty-seven years at the cost of eleven million gold ducats, the work was done. To make the morticing cement more durable, it was mixed with the blood of steers. Slaves bore the mighty stones from distant quarries and up the hill, leaving their cabins below and the play of their

children, flowers in dust. The approach is a stone scarp, smooth and broad as a highway but writhing like a snake and ever within range of the terraced towers slitted for guns. At the very top one enters the castillo, as one climbs down from the turret into a submarine. Narrow corridors with rounded ceilings six feet high and periodic widenings for sentries and munitions labyrinth the breadth and depth, some declining slowly to sea-level, some, it is said, tunneling the harbor to the inner city. These ways, subtly devised, are the afferent sound-nerves of the huge stone monster. A shoe scraping the floor carries two hundred yards from sentry to sentry; no faint intrusion anywhere could fail to rouse the guards: fifty-five, on shifts of only three hours lest their attention tire.

The citizens of Cartagena lived within water and sun. The canal brought the sea and the river Magdalena to the city walls and the plazas, some arcaded from the glare, all commanded by a church or government or Holy Office building. Sloops with sails saffron, emerald and ruby from Panama across the Bay of Darien; sampans from the Magdalena, rode at the wharves. Every year the great fleet came from Cadiz; for two months Cartagena was a continental fair, exchanging gold and silver, coffee, cacao, indigo, tobacco, cotton, leather, cinnamon, sugar, quinine and the thousand fruits of the American earth, against the goods of Europe, factored by Spain — until the late colonial days, when contraband from England and New England were common. Always, the town was full of transients: soldiers, sailors, lawyers, scribes, priests, prostitutes and poets. But the town's folk absorbed them. The folk had dwelt long together, a little too close, like a family in a shut house; it had the ease, the shorthand speech, the sudden flaring quarrels of a family; it had the relaxation not only of family closeness but of a common fear, accepted, atmospheric, sensuously relieved by each moment's passing without danger.

The fear had cause. Cartagena was Spain's strongbox for gold, and was the master-key for the continent. The Caribbean swarmed with all the greeds of Europe; the hungry powers, England, France, Holland, constantly assailed the established

greed of Spain. No island, no shore, was safe from the buccaneers, true representatives of the mercantile nations. Ten times before 1600, Cartagena had been attacked; at least five times looted. Sir Francis Drake with a thousand soldiers and two hundred ships; Sir Henry Morgan with an army of ten thousand; Sir Edward Vernon with twenty-seven thousand men on a hundred and ninety ships . . . glorified filibusters . . . were driven off, but not before they had stolen millions of gold and splattered the streets with blood. Fear had other causes. . . .

The New Kingdom of Granada, seven hundred thousand square miles of telluric tumult, embraced a chaos of peoples between the extremes of Mexico and Peru, who had never been gathered up into the strictly organized social patterns of the Incas. Spain's dominion was frail over these individualistic peoples. The kingdom's capital was Santa Fe de Bogotá, but its gate was Cartagena. To the west, Panama's lethal jungles; to the northeast, the titan Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, prong of the Andes that bounds Venezuela's coast; south, the green swamp where the Cauca joins the Magdalena, a hell of snakes, alligators and mosquitoes, bearing malaria and yellow fever . . . all generated fear in the conquerors. Toward the Equator, the land lifts; the three walls of the Andes isolate the valleys, isolate the climates and the cultures, stubborn, anarchic, sealed from one another. Into this stratified world the Spaniards came with strange dynamic depths, new conflicts of class and caste, and corroded the old forms away, releasing the sealed valleys into ethnic revolution. The climate of New Granada was tumult and fear. The capital, Bogotá, responded with stiff theology. Bogotá never had the magnificence of Mexico and Puebla, the luxuriance of Lima, the loveliness of Quito in its diadem of volcanos. It lay under the eastern cordillera on an immense plain nearly nine thousand feet above the sea. Water from the mineral mountains made the plain fertile, but frosts frequently burned the corn before it could be harvested. It was a city of restraint, outwardly courteous, inwardly grim like its grey sky. Its temples made few rhetorical gestures; its houses achieved beauty only in intimate details. Here no splendid

Baroque flowered as in Quito. The discipline of insecurity within the cold air encouraged the casuistic arts and poetry in the obscurantist idioms of Góngora and *culteranismo*. The public servants from Spain in the eighteenth century were often liberals. They landed in Cartagena and made the tremendous voyage up the Magdalena in primitive sampans: long shallow canoes with a lugsail and a flimsy awning as defense against rain and the worse sun. They brought with them their rococo *objets d'art*, their sophisticated books. But the weeks on the mammoth river, the ascent among crocodiles and lethal insects to a walled world remote as another planet, transformed them. Fear cracked their liberal patina. They found themselves forced, against conscience, to meet the dynamic chaos of the American world with violence, with deceit. . . .

In northern New Granada, a generation before the respectable Cabildos of 1810, the people suddenly revolted. The year was 1781, and the town where it began was Socorro. With its wood-balconied stone houses and its patios of orange trees, the town rises upon the heft of a mountain; its upper streets are granite steps, its bottom lands are lush. Tobacco was a state monopoly, but the farmers for long had sent their unlawful produce by burro and sampan down the rivers to the contraband ships. Now the expensive Bourbon wars of Spain called for more taxes; and the more efficient Bourbon régime brought officers to every village to burn the illegal leaves, uproot the excess plants, exact the *alcabala*, the royal tribute. A woman started the great revolt of the Comuneros: ¹ Manuela Beltrán, a simple farmer's wife. She called the men to the plaza, gave them their slogan: *Viva el Rey, muera el mal gobierno* — "Long live the King, down with the bad government!" and they drove out the police, they beat up the clergy. The fury spread from town to town, the women always first. Soon whole districts were in the hands of the people. But they had no leaders; they could not be captained by women, surely; nor by their humble selves. So the Comuneros went to the big estates, battered down the doors, flogged the servants who would not

¹ Commoners.

join them; and when they were in the presence of the landlord, took off their hats and respectfully demanded that the rich man lead them. Many aristocrats fled, some refused and had their mansions burned; but many remained and graciously accepted. To the folk it was quite simple; they loved their invisible King but they wanted the fruit of their labors. To the landlords it was also simple; they would lead the rabble until the sweet right moment to betray them. The revolt swept the whole province. The farmers and artisans, armed with machetes, axes, staves, and an occasional shotgun, ploughed the rough roads from town to town. They won Bucaramanga, Tunja, bloodlessly. They converged on Bogotá. Everywhere, they beat the priests, chased out the constables, gave the rich man a chance to lead them. They looked at their muddy bare feet and dared not enter the archiepiscopal city. All they wanted was justice; to keep their bread and feed their children. They were good Christians, and Long Live the Catholic King. So they camped in Zipaquirá, the ancient Chibcha salt mine, fifty miles north of Bogotá. The mine is a cavity in the side of a mountain, huge as a lofty city of cathedrals, and each corridor is a nave with vast salt-encrusted columns. They sent their messengers to the capital, explaining their demands; and the authorities came back and signed the Capitulations: taxes were scaled down, monopolies were abolished, trade would be free, home rule — under the King, of course — was granted. Before the authorities of King and Church had gone out to capitulate, they had sent for a notary and sworn to a strange statement: every concession they were about to make to the mob, they declared, was under duress, null and void. But the folk saw them sign and take the oath of good faith on the Bible; the thousands of men and women, farmers, weavers, carpenters, smiths and wrights, dispersed rejoicing, and went home.

At once, the landowners who had consented to lead and who had written profuse explanations of their conduct to the Viceroy and Archbishop, turned against the people. Troops came up the Magdalena. In small detachments, they visited every hamlet and town; the landowners identified the ringleaders;

their tongues were cut out, they were beheaded and their quartered bodies exposed on the plaza before the church. The less important rebels, and the women, were merely hanged or shot.

Far to the south in Peru, the Indians of the Andes caught fire and beheld their past glory. José Gabriel Tupac-Amaru, mestizo son of the Incas, suddenly emerged from the fastness east of Cuzco on the edge of the Amazonian jungle, whence his remote ancestors had risen. As he marched west to take the ancient capital, calling himself Tupac-Amaru II, thousands, tens of thousands, joined him. The lords of State and Church in luxurious Lima shuddered. A nation was waking from its two and a half centuries of coma. Sullen submission had persuaded the Spaniards and the creoles that the Indians were born to be slaves, and by decree of God their perpetual debtors for the gift of the True Faith. Now an army of forty thousand rumbled toward them. Then God seemed to prove the caballeros right. Tupac-Amaru II did not commit the error of the Comuneros; he did not absurdly demand the help of the rich creoles. But he lacked the discipline and organizing genius of his fathers. In hundreds of villages, the folk, freed by his army, assumed they were free of the strict rule which the Spaniards had taken over from the Incas; they expelled their judges and constables, they settled down in a paradise of communal fragments not known to them since before the Incas had gathered them together. The forty thousand warriors were not welded into a cogent force, but drifted away, drawn by the magnet of the local *ayllu*.² Spain's soldiers converged on the mountains; up the Magdalena and along the Cordillera, and from as far south as La Plata. They fell on the villages, one by one; Tupac-Amaru was manacled and brought to Cuzco.

In 1571, the true Tupac-Amaru, a youth of sixteen, son of Manco II, had died bravely on Cuzco's central square. His body had lain in the house of his mother, and was then buried with pomp in the Cathedral. But the viceroy in Lima ordered

² The primitive small community which has been the basic unit of Peruvian Indian life since long before the Incas.

him disintombed and beheaded; and the head was placed on a pike in the great plaza. That night, under the moon, a multitude silently came and kneeled before the head of their last Inca. Now, two hundred and ten years later, the scene was repeated — and improved. The Colombian historian, Germán Arciniegas, describes it:

For the last time, the Visitador Areche entered the cell of Tupac-Amaru II to persuade him to name his chief accomplices. 'The only conspirators,' replied the Inca, 'are you and I. You as the oppressor of my people, and I as one who tried to save them.' Areche, furious, leaves the prison. In the square the army is drawn up, in parade uniform. Behind the army, the people. On the broad balconies, clusters of Spaniards . . . A tattoo of the drums. The criminals are carried out in panier cages, drawn by horses. First to be hanged are Antonio Bastidas, Tupac's brother-in-law, and the three captains. Then, Francisco, Tupac's uncle, and Hipólito, his son, have their tongues pulled out, are garroted, bound to posts and strangled. The rest of the chiefs are bound to the tails of horses who are then galloped through the plaza. Blood in pools vermilions the stone cobbles. There are cries of agony, stifled mutterings, women faint. The Visitador with meticulous eye follows the work of the executioners. Tupac-Amaru and his wife, Micaela Bastidas, and their twelve-year-old son witness the proceedings; awaiting their turn.

Micaela Bastidas is a heroic woman. She has followed and aided the campaign of her husband, sending him word of the movements of the enemy, and she was at his side when he was betrayed and delivered up by Landaeta. The executioner takes her from her husband's side and wrenches out her tongue. Then she is garroted; but she is slow about expiring. He kicks her to death. It is the turn of the Inca.

The hangman begins by cutting out his tongue. The Inca makes no sound, no sign, but of disgust at the blood staining his dress. He is thrown down, and each of his arms and legs is cinched to a separate horse; then the horses are whipped in four directions. But despite the spurs and the whips and the shouts of the riders, they refuse to budge. The Inca is released; the Visitador orders that his head be cut off.³

Thus, toward the close of Spain's American kingdoms, fear mated with the conviction of righteousness, to breed ferocity.

³ *Los Comuneros*, by Germán Arciniegas, Bogotá, 1939.

Within two years of independence, New Granada is submerged by civil war. The fanatical royalists of Pasto in the South march against Popayán, the liberal university town, and burn it. Viceroy Sámano comes up from Peru and murders the leading citizens of Quito. In northern Tunja, the federalists form a union of free states; Cartagena joins; Santa Marta and Panamá, loyal to Spain, make war on them. In Bogotá, Antonio Nariño, friend and disciple of Miranda whom he has known in London, sets up a strong central state called Cundinamarca (the plain of Bogotá) and argues the case with Camilo Torres, president of the Tunja Federation which is trying to hold together with an instrument weak as the first American Articles of Confederation.

Antonio Nariño, born in Bogotá, fifteen years younger than Miranda, eighteen years older than Bolivar, stands halfway between them . . . between the rationalist, remote from the American heart, and the leader who finally expressed it. Like Bolivar, he was born a gentleman. Before he was thirty, he was collector of Church tithes in Bogotá, a minor post reserved to creoles of rank; but lucrative since custom (not law) countenanced the use of the funds for private speculation. Nariño spent the churchly gold for anti-clerical books, a library of revolution for his townsmen to browse in; and for a press on which he printed his translation of the new French *Rights of Man*. The Spanish bureaucrats were troubled; Nariño wrote in defense that the Paris document on Natural Rights merely seconded Saint Thomas Aquinas. This confused the Spaniards, and they imprisoned Nariño — not for sedition, but for embezzlement of funds; and he was shipped to Spain. In Cadiz, he escaped from his guards who were glad to let him go. In Madrid (where he lodged with Bolivar's uncle) he petitioned the King for a chance to prove his innocence: his treasury was solvent, he said, and the French *Rights of Man* were echoes of Vitoria and the Laws of the Indies. The King kept silent and Nariño was offended. In London, he conferred with Miranda, with Pitt, with the medley of Masons, Jesuits, revolutionists and bankers who met in Miranda's Jermyn Street flat. But

this did not satisfy Nariño. On a false passport, he stole back to America, where there was a price on his head. From Coro he made his way home by foot and muleback, and suddenly appeared before his amazed wife in Bogotá. On he went to Socorio and San Gil, hoping to revive the rebellion of the Comuneros. Nariño's wife loved him; she was a devout Catholic, and certain her husband was in danger of damnation. To save his soul she surrendered his body to the Bishop, and Nariño was again in prison. For six years, manacled and chained, he survived in the dark cells of Cartagena. Then he was released on probation to his family estate near Bogotá. Napoleon rose, every liberal was suspect; once again in chains, Nariño was borne down the Magdalena. . . . The 1810 revolution freed him.

Now, in Bogotá, he wrote a weekly journal, *La Bagatela*, which fulminated against halfhearted patriots and half-powered constitutions. Then war with Tunja. Nariño's General Baraya is defeated by the federalists⁴ at Pamplona, near the Venezuelan border; Baraya switches to the victors and marches against his former chief. Nariño turns him back at the gates of Bogotá. For awhile the two sides retire to their strongholds; at once the royalists press in against them, from the east of Venezuela, from the north of Santa Marta, from the south where the Spaniard Sámano joins the men of Pasto. Nariño's day in the sun is soon over. He attacks near Pasto, his army is wiped out, he is captured and (for the third time) sent in chains in a ship's hold around the Horn to Spain, where he will lie in prison (still composing pamphlets) for four years — until Spain's new liberal revolution.

Meanwhile, Cartagena, a nominal member of the Confederacy whose capital is Tunja, insists on virtual independence. It is surrounded by foes. The royalists, based on Santa Marta and encouraged by the quarrels of the federalists and centralists, have pushed up the Magdalena, fortified the city of Ten-

⁴ The centralists (in Argentina they called themselves Unitarios) wanted a strong central government; the federalists wanted a loose one with provincial autonomy. In most Latin-American countries, the struggle between them, immediately upon independence, resulted in civil war.

erife, fanned east to the mountains where they hope to join forces with their friends in Venezuela.

. . . This was the scene, when Bolivar sailed in from Curaçao between the claws of Cartagena harbor, bristling with forts.

BOLIVAR BEGINS

IF BOLIVAR was known at all, pacing the streets of Cartagena, it was as the man who had lost the great stronghold of Puerto Cabello. The officers who came with him were more highly regarded; in particular, Colonel José Félix Ribas, the husband of Bolivar's Aunt Josefa, who took care of him after the death of his mother. Bolivar wanted to fight, but the wars were outside the walls of Cartagena, and no one would commission him. Bolivar knew what was needed. Cartagena (perhaps because he was there) must become the base of operations, first to unify New Granada, then to reconquer Venezuela. He talked his idea in the cafés; the officers, Venezuelan and Granadan, thought he talked nonsense. He could not convince his comrades — he could not fight. Until he could fight, he would *speak* to the world. He went to his room and wrote his first political papers.

The earliest, dated "November 2, 1812 . . . Second Year of Independence" addressed "to Americans" and titled *On the Conduct of the Government of Monteverde*, tells the bad faith of the Spaniards: when they signed treaties of peace as they had done with Miranda, it was to proceed more swiftly in their acts of extermination. "War, only war, can save us from the faithless hateful tyrants." The second paper, *An Exposition Directed to the Congress of New Granada*, enumerates the political and strategical errors of Venezuela. Coro should have been attacked before Monteverde could sail in and use it for a base; a disciplined army should have been trained, instead of relying romantically on the natural triumph of good over evil; the government should have been strong. Bolivar offers his services as a soldier and asks for a chance to report to Congress in person. The invitation did not come. Hence, the

third paper: *A Memorial to the Citizens of New Granada by a Citizen of Caracas.*

It begins:

To save New Granada from the fate of Venezuela and to redeem the latter are the purposes I propose to discuss in this report. Accept it with indulgence, fellow citizens, in view of its laudable motives.

He launches an analytical assault on the lax federal system to which most of his readers in Cartagena, and indeed everywhere except in distant Bogotá, were committed.

The laws which our magistrates consulted were not those which could teach the practical science of government but the figments of certain good-hearted visionaries who, imagining republics in the air, tried to achieve political perfection on the pre-supposition that humanity can be made perfect. Thus we had philosophers for chiefs, philanthropy for legislation, dialectics for tactics, and sophists for soldiers.

From this false doctrine, he goes on, came the opposition to training an army: "good souls gathered together would be strong enough." And the result was financial waste, neglect of agriculture, impotence.

What weakened Venezuela most was the federal form it adapted, following exaggerated maxims on the rights of man. . . . The federal system, although the most perfect and most capable of bringing human happiness to society, is the least proper to our nascent states.

The earthquake, the exploitation by the clergy of the superstitions of the people, were mere contributory minor causes of the disaster. Why did Caracas fall? Because Coro was not defended. "Coro is to Caracas as Caracas is to America." Spain with a foothold in Venezuela can subjugate New Granada. Napoleon in Spain will drive hosts of priests and soldiers to America to regain here what they have lost at home. For her own sake, New Granada must save Venezuela. And the time is propitious, for the enemy is thinly spread. An army of

Granadans on Venezuelan soil would draw thousands of patriots to the colors.

In Tunja, Camilo Torres, federalist chief, read this attack on his principles, and was impressed by the man who wrote it: as was Antonio Nariño, who agreed in Bogotá; and even Rodríguez Torrices, the state president in anarchic Cartagena. But the lucid style, the steel-cold analysis, did not prove that the author was a soldier. Cartagena had launched a limited offensive under the command of Colonel Manuel Castillo, an ambitious young Granadan who looked with acid eyes on the refugees from Venezuela. He preferred Pierre Labatut, a French soldier of fortune, who at least had some claim for leadership, being a veteran of the Napoleonic wars. Castillo sent Labatut with a fleet of small skiffs to storm Santa Marta. Miguel Carabaño, an officer who had come with Bolivar, and Cortés Campomanes, a republican Spaniard, he assigned to clean up the royalists from the villages west toward Panama, the granary of Cartagena. Spottily, as the campaign progressed, the left bank of the Magdalena was occupied. Since Bolivar insisted on a post, he could take over the command of seventy men in Barranca, an unimportant river village still surrounded by royalist troops. He was not to move, of course, without orders from Labatut. Bolivar did not hesitate. He put down his pen and went to the malarial mudhole of Barranca.

Across the river stood the Spaniards and the royalists, solidly eastward to the Andes, where in the mountain strongholds of Mérida and Trujillo they joined forces with the royalists of Venezuela. About a hundred miles up the river from Barranca, the royalists held fortified Tenerife and both banks all the way to Mompo, which was an isolated republican island. Bolivar visited the plantations near Barranca. In a few days his seventy men had swollen to two hundred. He was intense but at ease. During the day he drilled, and collected a fleet of river boats. At night he relaxed, played cards with the local fathers and danced with the daughters. In the hamlet of Solamina, he found Anita Lenoir; they became lovers. But when his amphibious force was ready, he told her he was not coming back.

"Where are you going?" she asked. He replied: "To Caracas."

He never returned to Anita. Flouting orders to remain in Barranca, he moved his tiny army, in the sampans he had gathered, up the river to Tenerife. He took the town by surprise, collected much booty of ammunitions, recruited more men, and sailed on to Mompo, which received him with flowers and flags. Now, he faced east. On the river Cesar, close to the rise of the Andes, a strong royalist force was camped in comfort. Bolivar's knotty little band pounced on it, capturing eleven boats and stores of guns. Again he turned west to the Magdalena, ascending it south. The royalists, massed in the mountains toward Venezuela, figured he was bound for Bogotá. But Bolivar abandoned his boats and marched swiftly east again across country to Ocaña, key to the Granadan Andes. In two weeks, starting with seventy men, he had freed the whole lower Magdalena and cleared the way to Cúcuta on the frontier between New Granada and Venezuela.

Labatut was furious at the insubordination; even angrier was Castillo, but Torrices smiled, and told his officers to let the young man alone. Meanwhile came letters from Pamplona far to the southeast. The Spanish General Correa threatened the lovely white Granadan city, set in a bowl of mountains; Bolivar was invited to defend it. He told the envoys he must first have the assent of Torrices. Without waiting for the reply to his note, he despatched a false report to Castillo describing his "plan" to march immediately east to Cúcuta. His strategy was to have the false plan intercepted — as it was — by Correa, who did not stir from his defenses in Cúcuta. As soon as the affirmative word came from Torrices, Bolivar strode unimpeded to Pamplona. This gave him the approach he wanted from the south toward Correa: a long enclosed valley descending seven thousand feet into Cúcuta. Now Castillo intervened with an elaborate triangular plan of battle which would have cost Bolivar all his advantage of an intense single thrust. Castillo's motive, since he could no longer order Bolivar back to Barranca, was to minimize his control of the campaign by splitting the attack into three. There was no time to argue.

Bolivar pocketed his superior's orders and proceeded on his own. Reinforced by a small troop (under his uncle Ribas) which had joined him in Ocaña, he surprised Correa, whose more numerous troops were entrenched on the hill rimming the low valley of Cúcuta. In four hours the Spaniard was routed, and Bolivar, driving him to San Antonio across the frontier, stood within the gate of Venezuela.

By now Castillo was his open enemy. And Castillo, after Torrices, was the head man of Cartagena (Labatut, the Frenchman, had been defeated at Santa Marta). Castillo went to Torrices with two indictments of Bolivar. The second, that Bolivar was squandering funds in Cúcuta, had no foundation: the young aristocrat, lavish and careless in his personal expenses, revealed in the accounts of this campaign a frugal care of public money. Castillo's first point was better: it was true, he told Torrices, that with a handful of men Bolivar had thrust east from the river and surprised Correa. But Correa's small army was a mere outpost of Monteverde's organized force in Venezuela. To challenge the Spaniard by invasion was sheer folly. Torrices was impressed, and ordered Bolivar to stay where he was. Bolivar, who knew the urgency of time, argued that Monteverde in Venezuela was in enemy territory; that as he, the Venezuelan, with his Granadans moved into the country, they would gather men and supplies until the proportion of power shifted. Moreover, said Bolivar, in the east of Venezuela, the *Oriente*, General Santiago Mariño had already gained a foothold in the important towns of Cumaná and Maturin. And the Island of Margarita was free. Monteverde would be compelled to strike east against Mariño, while he, with his swelling force, avalanched on him from the west.

The crux, Bolivar knew, was Castillo's pride. He wrote him propitiatory letters; urged him to come to Cúcuta and take command; offered to serve under him, even to withdraw from the army. Castillo replied with insults; Bolivar stifled his rage and answered humbly. For two and a half months, the battle of letters wove between Cúcuta and Cartagena. Bolivar's gaze shifted to the south, where Antonio Nariño still ruled in

Bogotá. He exposed to him the folly of Castillo, the chaos of Cartagena. Torrices grew worried; the fiery young man might shift his allegiance to Bogotá. So at last the Congress in Tunja acted: Bolivar was made a citizen of the Federation of New Granada, given the rank of Brigadier, and told to go ahead. Then the Congress negated what it granted. Bolivar was in charge of the invading force; but Castillo, his rival and the bitter enemy of his campaign, was made second in command; Bolivar might advance only with the approval of each step by Castillo and Castillo's adjutant and partisan, Lieutenant Francisco de Paula Santander. Moreover, under no circumstance must Bolivar penetrate farther east than Mérida and Trujillo, the Venezuelan mountain provinces directly contiguous with New Granada . . . and only thus far, upon the written word of the Congress in Tunja.

Bolivar stopped arguing. The instructions made the campaign impossible. He pocketed them, and proceeded to climb into the perpendicular Venezuelan mountains.

They rise, shaggy with coarse brush, more precipitous, more violent than the vaster Granadan ranges. In valleys that are gorges, the sunless villages lie buried; but when the valleys broaden, the towns burst with pent energy and the liberated fields, minting sun, smile under wheat and maize.

Castillo went along; but sent a message back to the Congress: "With so small a force, it is perilous to attack Venezuela, and without a doubt we shall be sacrificed if we go beyond Mérida under the command of Bolivar whose plans are disorderly and rash."

Bolivar sent Castillo ahead with a vanguard of troops; at La Grita they met a royalist force and routed it: in the field Castillo was primarily the soldier. But when Bolivar rode up and put out his hand to congratulate him, Castillo was again the dissident and refused to move forward. He asked for a staff meeting, as authorized by the Congress; and when Bolivar refused, knowing his plan of advance would be defeated, Castillo rode back to Cúcuta. Bolivar named Santander second in command and ordered him to move the troops. Santander re-

fused. For the first time Bolivar measured the man who was to be most fateful in his life. Santander, nine years Bolivar's junior, was twenty-one. Born in Cúcuta, the border city between Venezuela and New Granada, he had been educated in the churchly schools of Bogotá. He was a lawyer, a Catholic, a convinced federalist, an admirer of Castillo. Barely out of college, he had given up the law to fight for independence.

He said to Bolivar: "It is my duty to follow Brigadier Castillo. No staff council has approved an advance."

Bolivar faced him. He saw a tall young man, a man of cold reserve with handsome long sharp features, a mustache curved to the thin mouth, and hair elegantly billowing from his wide brow. Santander saw the shorter, darker, nervous Venezuelan.

Bolivar said: "Lieutenant, before nightfall I shall have to shoot you or you will have to shoot me."

The intellectual Granadan did not reply; he solved the dilemma by following Castillo back to Cúcuta, taking a good part of the little army with him.

The clean-cut defection of his two chief officers calmed Bolivar, and put him in good humor. He responded to trouble as a kite rises against the pull of its cord. While the dark rushed from the deep valley upward toward the heights still cresting a blue sky, he spoke to his four hundred men:

"We are going forward. We are going to Caracas. Those of you who are not ready: now is the time to turn back."

They cheered. Four officers stepped forward to stand beside Bolivar. Two were Granadans, little more than boys: Atanasio Girardot and Antonio Ricaurte, both dead within the year; two were Venezuelans: the passionate Ribas, who survived only a little longer, and Rafael Urdaneta.

Mérida, clerical town, stands on the rim of a valley long and deep; the lashing river, the groves of plethoric banana and the stridulous palms, rise from below like an invasion against the prim white streets. The mountaineers gathered in the plaza to have a look at this new man, Bolivar. He had given the authorities in Tunja and Cartagena not his "belief" that the Ven-

ezuelans would flock to him when he appeared, but "the fact" hurled like a cannon ball and as solid. The mountaineers listened in silence while the Brigadier harangued them about the tyranny of Spain and about their own government which would soon bring them freedom. The words did not make sense to the Andinos who, for all their mixed blood, were Indians in spirit. No government meant freedom to *them*. As to the tyranny: maybe so; but at least the King was far away, like the good Jesus. They stood politely until Bolivar finished; then still in silence they walked home. Few joined the army; even fewer brought supplies. But it did not occur to Bolivar that his "fact" had been false; it was simply not yet true, it would have to be created.

In February 1813, Domingo de Monteverde, now the dignified Captain General and Political Chief of Venezuela, completed a sixteen-thousand word report to the King's Minister of War in Madrid.

Every day I become more disillusioned with the Venezuelans; kindness can do nothing, only punishment and then more force to prevent reprisals. . . . The spirit of insurrection does not change . . . It is a most grave disease. Statesmen consider it an incurable madness. . . . Until now, there has been no convincing them, and every day they persist more obstinately in their effort to win liberty, independence and — horrible word! — equality. Your Excellency must redouble care and vigilance, insisting that all your subalterns maintain the public security, which will not come while the land harbors a single one of the wretches who deposed the legitimate authority and proclaimed independence.

On these grounds, with much verbosity, the former frigate captain justifies to the conscience of the King his betrayal of the terms of Miranda's capitulation. He concludes with a list of several hundred enemies of Spain, classified as "most dangerous" (these are marked with a cross), as "exalted" in their passion and as "less exalted." He names men of the capital and of the provinces; nobles like the Marqués de Mixares, many of Bolivar's family, and humble barbers and watch makers. *Bolivar's name is not, among the hundreds.*

Bolivar's lucidity had told him that Monteverde despised the

man to whom he had given a passport in La Guaira — despised him as an enemy, too much to place him in his “Who’s Who” of rebels. Hence Bolivar’s second statement to the Tunja Congress, that Monteverde feared no threat from the west and would proceed against Santiago Mariño in the east. But the Spaniard attacked in Oriente, with only a part of his troops, Mariño with two officers who would soon be famous, Manuel Piar and Francisco Bermúdez, defeated him near Maturin. Monteverde returned to Caracas. Soon he had cause to look west, and to correct his oversight of Bolivar.

Seizing the supplies that did not come spontaneously, Bolivar pushed on to Trujillo. At every village he spoke to the people in the public square; they listened stolidly and walked away. His words were rhetorical; his reports to the Congress preserved the fiction of his dependence upon that dialectical body; but his thinking was clear. He knew he was alone. He knew his ground was liquid and needed a precipitate. The crystallizing step must come at once.

Trujillo is a mountain city of steep streets, rising on a divide that falls northwest toward Lake Maracaibo with access to the sea, and northeast to Barinas, capital of the plains that teemed with horse and cattle. In both regions, the lieutenants of Monteverde with adequate force now watched Bolivar. Beyond was the open road to Valencia and Caracas, where Monteverde’s main army stood to move if Bolivar dared come down from Trujillo in the mountains.

The spirit of the land was chaos; Monteverde may be excused for not judging it well. The ferocity of the Spaniards, the clamor of the royalist priests, had neither destroyed nor hardened — it had distracted the people’s will for independence. The earthquake, the bands of revolted slaves and disinherited mestizos, the economic disorder, the fanatical zeal of the partisan minorities, both patriot and royalist, the appearance and sudden collapse of the Republic, had bred, above all, confusion. This Bolivar now knew. He had seen the pitiful quarrels in New Granada, making the land impotent, preparing it for the same fate as Venezuela’s. His objective grasp was clear; and clear was his sense of destiny: of what *he* was

missioned to do. *He must crystallize the situation.*

A few hours after his march into Trujillo, bills of white parchment, with words hand-written in black ink (the region had no printing press) appeared on the walls of houses. The streets were calm and clean, rising with cobbled pavement from the lush valley toward forbidding heights; the plaza and its church were a pause of repose in the sharp ascent. The inhabitants spelled out a Proclamation:

SIMON BOLIVAR

Brigadier of the Union, General-in-chief of the
Army of the North, liberator of Venezuela

TO HIS FELLOW-CITIZENS

VENEZUELANAS:

An army of your brothers sent by the sovereign Congress of New Granada has come to free you, and is already with you, having expelled the oppressors from the provinces of Mérida and Trujillo.

We are sent to destroy the Spaniards, to protect the Americans, and to re-establish the republican governments which formed the Confederation of Venezuela. The states our arms cover are again ruled by their old constitutions and magistrates, enjoying fully their freedom and independence; for our mission is solely to break the chains of slavery that still bind some of our populations, without pretence on our part of making laws or performing acts of authority to which the right of war might entitle us.

We could not calmly watch the afflictions visited upon you by the barbarous Spaniards; who have annihilated you with rapine and murder, despising the sacred rights of man, dishonoring solemn treaties, committing all crimes: in brief, reducing the Republic of Venezuela to desolation. May the monsters who infest Colombian soil and have drenched it with blood, vanish forever; may their punishment fit their treachery, to wash out our shame and show the nations of the world that the sons of America cannot be outraged with impunity.

Despite our just anger against the Spaniards, we magnanimously offer them, for the last time, conciliation and friendship; we still invite them to live among us in peace, provided they detest their crimes, change heart sincerely, and work with us to destroy the intruder government of Spain and to re-establish the Republic of Venezuela.

Every Spaniard who does not conspire by every active, efficacious means against the tyranny and in favor of the just cause, will be

held as an enemy, punished as a traitor to the fatherland, and shot. But a general, absolute pardon is herewith conceded to all who join us, with or without arms; and to those who give aid to the citizens in their struggle to shake off the yoke of the tyrant. The officers of war and the civil servants who uphold the government of Venezuela will remain at their posts. In a word, Spaniards who serve the state will be called, and will be treated as, Americans.

And you Americans, whom treason or error has estranged from justice: know that your brothers forgive you and sincerely deplore your false steps; for we are persuaded that you cannot be guilty; that blindness alone and the ignorance in which you have lived, are the true authors of your crimes. Do not fear the sword that comes to avenge you and to cut the ignominious cords with which your executioners have bound you to themselves. Count on immunity for your honor, your lives, your property. The name American will be your guaranty, your safeguard. Our arms have come to protect you, and shall not be raised against you.

This amnesty extends even to traitors who have recently committed crimes; and will be so religiously observed that no cause or pretext will make us break our promise; no matter how extreme the motive you give us to act against you. Spaniards and Canary Islanders, count on death, even if, as neutrals, you do not actively work for the freedom of America. Americans, count on life, even if you are guilty.

Headquarters of Trujillo, 15 June 1813, 3 of Independence.

SIMON BOLIVAR

THE "WAR TO THE DEATH"

THIS WAR without quarter, the famous *Guerra a Muerte*, not only defied the rules of organized Christian carnage, but broke with precedent in the American struggle. In Venezuela, Spaniards were murdering republicans, but at least not by the King's fiat; in New Granada, the fighters on all sides took prisoners and let them live. What was Bolivar's impulse? Hate? Anger? Desperation? His move was deliberate as a gambit in chess; as the poet's choice of the word to produce a precise effect. His aim was not blood, but an idea.

At the time of the pronouncement he commanded sixteen

hundred men: eight hundred with him in Trujillo, three hundred with Ribas on the slope to Maracaibo, five hundred with Girardot at the foot of the plains of Barinas. Immediately facing him were at least five thousand Spaniards and tough llaneros under trained Spanish officers; and these but the vanguard of Monteverde's army. Sixteen hundred against sixteen thousand! And in Monteverde's hands were the ports of Venezuela from Maracaibo to La Guaira, with reinforcements momentarily expected from Spain and the Antilles. Far to the east — too remote to help — Arismendi held the Island of Margarita and Santiago Mariño had a foothold on the coast. But already, like the factions of New Granada, these republican chiefs were quarreling; Santiago Mariño claimed Margarita as his vassal; Arismendi, equally stubborn, wanted his native island for himself. With this superiority against him, east and north, and at his rear a divided New Granada and bitter personal opponents like Castillo, Bolivar's lawless proclamation seems mad. From the soldier's point of view, how could it serve his tiny band, about to challenge ten warriors to his one, to declare "war to the death" against them? Spain's officers and their Venezuelan hordes were already shooting prisoners, raping women, crushing the skulls of children: would not the *guerra a muerte* make it impossible for the authorities in Caracas and Madrid to curb them? Would not the ferocity of the new order, like a flame whipped by a wind, turn against the patriots? Indeed, this is what happened. In the seven dread years of "war to the death" before the conflict was at last normalized under the law of nations, it was the American patriots who suffered . . . most of all Bolivar's countrymen of Venezuela, and most among them his own class of educated whites, the mainstay of independence.

Bolivar's motive was not directly a soldier's, nor was it to deal justice. There were few conscious *Americans* in Venezuela or New Granada or indeed in the entire continent. Bolivar's aim was to *create* them; and on that premise, his "war to death" made sense. Mountain, jungle, desert, isolated the American

communities, each of which knew itself by its own name. The system of Spain, barring trade and intercourse between them, linking each directly and alone with herself, intensified the natural divisions. Venezuela, New Granada — all the Indies — were human archipelagoes in an earth sea. Only Spain composed them through her King and, above all, through her Church. The priests and friars might be lusty men who exploited their flock as harshly as the secular lords; but even the worst brought the Real Presence of justice and of brotherhood to the remotest village. Here was Bolivar's problem: the communities were divided, and in so far as they were joined at all, it was the undivided principle of King-and-Christ that joined them. He was not so foolish as to attack the Church; he must split it off from association with the King. The Bourbons on the throne of Spain, striving for a modern state alien to Spain and to the humble folk of America Hispana, maimed but could not kill the theocratic principle. Wounded, it grew desperate. The King was captive? the King allowed injustice? All the more cause to seek the King's King, Christ, and His Church (which labored to return the people to the King!). Bolivar's will to divorce loyalty to Christ from loyalty to the Spanish State took the form of substituting, as the symbol of brotherhood and justice, in place of the King, America and the Republic. The people must *know* they were Americans. *If they died because they were Americans, and because non-Americans killed them, they would come to know it.*

This, when he nailed his audacious words on the walls of Trujillo, was Bolivar's motive. The motive perhaps was integrally felt, rather than constructed, as the true poet hears the true word before he writes and tests it. But if intuition wrote, much conscious thought prepared. Bolivar had reverently studied the success of the North Americans. In the thirteen colonies, he knew, there had been local churches, not one Church mystically embodied in a priestly monarch. There had been local governments of free men, naturally touching one another. There had been, in place of the Catholic Truth incar-

nate in King and priest, the *search* for truth, fluid, communicable, channeled by the constitutional fathers into the idea of country. This, more than the low mountains and the temperate woods, more than homogeneity of tongue and ethics, explained the birth of the United States. Bolivar accepted the infinitely more complex fact of America Hispana, as he accepted himself. He was resolved to simplify it (as he had simplified himself), even at the cost of torrents of blood. This chaos of race, caste, color, of volcanic mountains and jungles and tropic desert: let his surgery *reduce* it to the simple balance of "American versus Spaniard"; let the *mystique* and the values of the Church be transfused, by the violence of blood, into the *mystique* of a republic.

Moreover, the disciple of Simón Rodríguez and the English empirical philosophers had no respect for the theocratic synthesis of Spain. He believed it to have been, even at its zenith, a façade for exploitation. It must die, not only in the persons of Spanish bureaucrats, but in the spirit of the American people. Bolivar attempted to force a *conversion* — little guessing how Spanish was his violent method.

Not less sharp was the conversion of his personal life, to which he committed himself. When he got to Caracas (since he parted from Anita Lenoir on the Magdalena, he was sure he would), he resolved to free his slaves (more than a thousand) and to give his lands to his two sisters and to the three illegitimate children of his brother, whom he had adopted on Juan Vicente's death. For himself, he would keep only the dubious income of the disputed copper mine of Aroa.

Events soon revealed the ideological accent of the *guerra a muerte*. Bolivar published it as soon as he could find a press; but in the years ahead he did what he could *not* to enforce it. He took prisoners, he tried to exchange them, and it was always the Spanish generals (or their subordinates) who lived down to the letter of his proclamation. Yet it would be as false to confine Bolivar's motive to *the idea* as to the lust for blood.

Bolívar had come to hate the Spaniards with all his instinctive love of the American earth. He was a zealot, indeed a supremely Spanish zealot. He could be cruel for his America, as his foe for King and Church. The sense of destiny, which on the way to Cartagena had matured from the chaos of his parts, gave him the dimension of detachment from his own life; but it gave him detachment also from the lives of others. Blood and individual injustice for a just cause did not disturb Bolívar.

Three centuries earlier, Hernán Cortés landed in Vera Cruz with a handful of horses and men. He learned of the immense rich Mexico beyond the mountains; of the great Emperor ruling a city of a million with a mighty army. Cortés knew that when his little company, alone on the hostile coast, learned of the overwhelming threat before them, they would be afraid; panic might drive them back to their ships. Hernán Cortés burned his ships. Now fear *must* make his men brave; now to conquest there was no alternative but death.

This deed of Cortés was typically Spanish. The Spaniard's sense of life is tragic; which means that he is ready to pay it out for what he loves or against what he hates. Life in itself is doomed; hence security and ease are of no value to him; value is a transcendence within life, urging it to the extremity of death. Bolívar was a son of Cortés. His enemy was Spain, his act was Spanish. The analogy goes deeper. Cortés as a man of the Renaissance had not lost contact with the soil and with the self dignified by the synthesis of medieval Europe. Endowed with a mighty energy, he turned from the Europe that had bred it to conquer a new world. Miranda and most of his intellectual comrades were men, not of the Renaissance but of the eighteenth-century, who had lost touch with both self and soil and hoped to replace the loss with mechanical devices (constitutions are political machines). Bolívar, whose organic power lay at a level far below his rational doctrines, was closer to the Renaissance than to Miranda. But this, too, was only a part. . . .

THE THOUSAND MILES

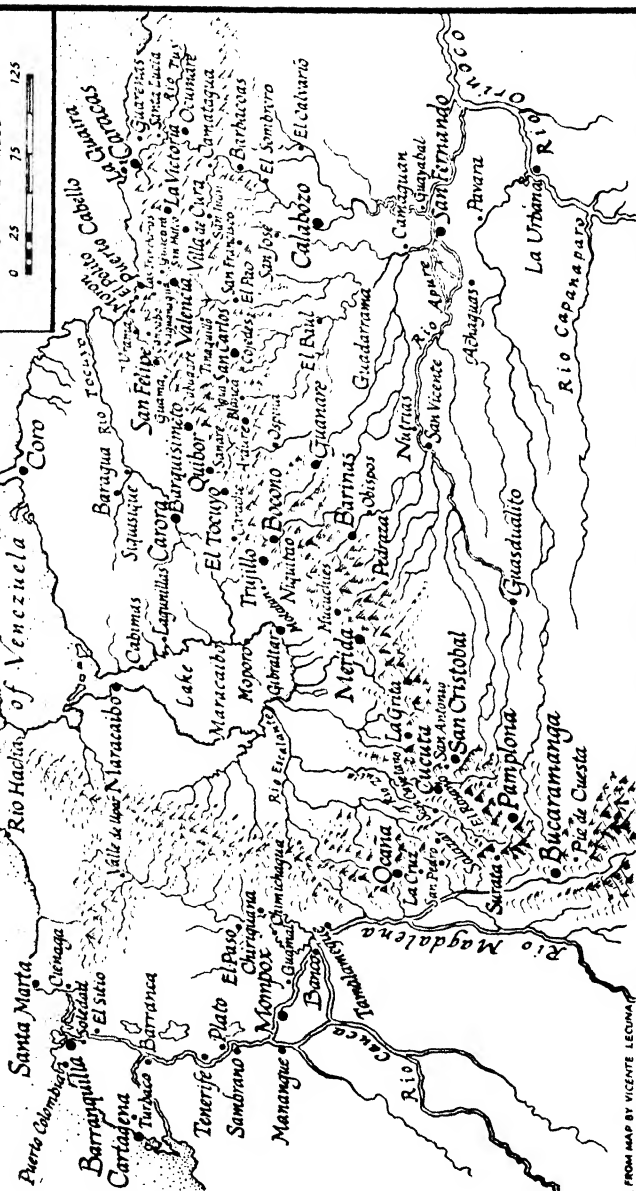
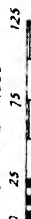
AT ONCE the campaign — known as the *Campaña Admirable* — began. Bolivar's slender army, as a visible concentration, would be overwhelmed by the enemy's far thicker force. It was of value only in dispersed attack; ubiquitous motion must take the place of mass. Speed against time and space. For with time the royalists could collect, and take the offensive; and space was their possession. In Ribas, brooding and passionate, the steadfast and lucid Urdaneta, the fearless Girardot and Ricaurte, Bolivar had captains mobile and tensile as the fingers of a hand — which he controlled and directed.

Ribas clawed at the royalists lazily guarding the slopes of Maracaibo, and dispersed them. Southeast, the enemy sat near the city of Barinas, then one of the largest and richest in Venezuela: emporium of all the hinterland of cattle and river commerce. From Trujillo, a road dropped straight to Barinas; and this, doubtless, the Spaniards figured, if Bolivar dared to come, would be his route. Bolivar remained, and sent Girardot circuitously north and east to Guanare, thence south and west to Barinas: a long way around. He surprised the royalists from the rear and whipped them. Frightened, both the defeated forces fell away to the east, where the verdant Andes recede into a desert fiercely matricing sudden fertile valleys. Ribas and Girardot swiftly cut around the retreating enemy, as around the ends in football; faced them before they could harden at their center, where Bolivar now pierced forward. Meanwhile, Urdaneta sliced in, south toward San Carlos. Again trying to concentrate, the royalists retreated, and at Las Horcones Ribas tore them, still off base, to ribbons. Now the four captains were running down the field, as if tossing the ball one to another, in constant fluid skirmishes, strictly co-ordinated by Bolivar. "No halt!" was the order. Monteverde, still in Caracas, sent instructions to his generals; they always arrived after the scene had changed. He moved up to Valencia. Dangerously close, Bolivar was in San Carlos, a day's march away. And wher-

BEAN . . . SEA

1812 ~ 1813

STATUTE MILES



FROM MAP BY VICENTE LECINA DE

ever he went, he issued his proclamation to the people: life to all Americans, whatever their deed; death to all Spaniards unless they *became* Americans.

In the open country, Monteverde began to re-form six thousand of his defeated soldiers to absorb the fresh stiffening of troops on their way with heavy guns from Caracas. Bolivar rushed Urdaneta and Girardot forward to catch them before they could come together in the great open plain south of Valencia. The royalists were hurled back into the city. But the confusion there was out of hand; and as Bolivar entered Valencia, Monteverde ran down to Puerto Cabello. Here, he could not be touched. Bolivar sent an urgent plea to Santiago Mariño in Oriente to blockade the harbor of Puerto Cabello with his little navy of privateer sloops. Then the patriot army plunged eastward, unopposed, into the valley of Aragua.

At San Mateo, Bolivar stopped long enough to tell his slaves they were free. At La Victoria he was met by envoys of the royalists of Caracas, ready to sign their surrender.

The terms were merciful. Spaniards were given time to move with their goods out of the country, unless they chose to become citizens of the American republic. Royalist Venezuelans were assumed not to exist; they were *Americans*. But the clement philosophy of Bolivar was not believed; Monteverde's breaking of his vow was recalled, and seven thousand frantic royalist Caraqueños rushed down the steep road to La Guaira, seeking ships to escape.

On August 7, Bolivar entered his native city: a year it was since he had left to fight his way back the thousand miles from Cartagena; seven weeks, since the campaign opened in Trujillo.

THE LIBERATOR OF CARACAS

DISOBEDIENCE had made it possible, but Bolivar had kept his promise to the Congress — and to Anita Lenoir. The fervor of Caracas, symbolized by maids in white who bombarded him with flowers, was all that pride could dream. His words to his

townsfolk were rose-hued, as was his letter to the men in Tunja, conveying the debt of Venezuela for what the Granadans had done and ignoring the affair with Castillo. But Bolivar knew the fragility of his triumph. Urdaneta said:

"We traversed the country, we have not subdued it. . . ."

Monteverde was intact in Puerto Cabello. Santiago Mariño had sent Piar with a few piraguas and goletas — privateer skiffs with one or two sails, lateen or lug — to blockade the harbor, but the great ships of Spain could pulverize them; that port and Coro were free for Spain's men and munitions, whereas the republican ports were bottled up. Even if they had been open, England and the United States, at war again, were not wasting arms on Venezuela. A British firm in La Guaira sold six thousand muskets to the republicans at the outrageous price of twenty pesos apiece; the hundred and twenty thousand pesos were paid, the guns were not delivered. Bolivar had four thousand Spanish prisoners in La Guaira; Monteverde held a few hundred patriots in Puerto Cabello. Bolivar offered to exchange the thousands for the hundreds, and Monteverde refused: his stand was that the republicans were traitors, not lawful enemies. Bolivar gave secret orders to let the four thousand gradually escape; he could not feed them, he feared a repetition of his own experience in Puerto Cabello, he was not ready to apply his "war without quarter."

The state of the land worsened. Crops had been neglected; the teeming livestock of the llanos went to the Spaniards or British and North American agents, who could pay; the country Bolivar had "traversed" was apathetic. Many a town, as soon as the patriots were gone, again raised the colors of Spain. There was no money; Bolivar requisitioned the silver plate of rich households and churches in order to mint it (which did not increase his popularity). There was no industry. The Marquis of Casa León, who had leaped like an acrobat in mid-air from the King to Miranda to Monteverde and now back to Bolivar, was appointed economic administrator of Caracas: Bolivar had no better choice. Factories were improvised for powder, lances, bits, saddles, shoes, alpagatas and

textiles. The heart of the city, still in ruins from the earthquake, was transformed into a fort. Bolivar called for a Constituent Congress to meet in January: a brief interval in which to get the news to the freed provinces, hold elections and transport the deputies to Caracas.

Meanwhile, Bolivar tried to govern with a cabinet of three: Antonio Muñoz Tebar, aged twenty-two, was Minister of Economy and Foreign Affairs; Tomás Montilla, thirty (the same age as Bolivar), held the portfolio of War; Rafael Diego Mérida, a creole of older vintage, became Minister of Justice — and proved to be a traitor. For Military Governor of Caracas and La Guaira, Bolivar made a keen appointment: Juan Bautista Arismendi.

Like his native Margarita, Arismendi was hard and ruthless; his bleak rough-hewn head seemed to imitate his island. He had led his men, fishers of pearls, against the Spaniards; when they returned in force, he fled to the wild interior, and the royalists avenged themselves by murdering his wife and son. Hate of Spain was his bread and his breath. He regathered his men and once more threw out the Spaniards: the first recovery after the capitulation of Miranda. He joined Santiago Mariño and Piar and the eighty officers who had raided the mainland from Trinidad. But Mariño claimed Margarita as part of his "free republic" of eastern Venezuela, and the two chiefs quarreled. By removing Arismendi from his island and granting him authority over Caracas, Bolivar hoped to ease him from his rivalry with Mariño — and Caracas got a master who would not hesitate, with the provincial's distrust of the city, to punish indiscipline or treason.

To Mariño, Bolivar sent propitiatory letters. Venezuela, he argued, could not survive if split into two nations. Indeed, all Venezuela was too weak; there must be one Colombian State from Panama to Peru! In this confederacy, Venezuela would have its own first magistrate, and Bolivar knew none fitter for the office than Santiago Mariño. Bolivar hoped, at the forthcoming Constituent Congress, he might propose Mariño as President of Venezuela. (For himself, he wrote,

he had no ambition but to serve in the field.) Meantime, would Mariño send more ships to blockade the royalist ports, and clean up the southeast llanos?

Despite Tebar, Bolivar was his own foreign minister: active and unsuccessful. His lucidity about America did not extend to the Anglo-Saxons. Self-interest and liberalism, he was convinced, would move the British or the United States or both to help at least as actively as the French had helped the Thirteen Colonies against England. He named envoys to Washington and London; to presage the great Colombian federation, he invited Antonio Nariño in Bogotá to send his representative along. The joint Venezuelan-Granadan mission would negotiate loans for war materials against unlimited opportunities of trade. The envoys' ship put in at the Caribbean port of St. Thomas, whose British governor jailed them as traitors to Spain, which at the moment was England's ally. They were released only on their word to return to Caracas. Bolivar sent an angry note to London protesting this insult to the Republic; but the damage to the morale at home was done. More bad news followed from abroad. Napoleon and his brother, the puppet King José in Madrid, had been a strong card against the royalists in America. Now it was known even in the villages that Fernando VII, the true King, was back on his throne. On the day Bolivar entered Mérida, May 23, 1813, before the start of the *Campaña Admirable*, the French had withdrawn from Spain's capital; on the day Bolivar rode into Caracas, Wellington had whipped the invader at Victoria and driven him back across the Pyrenees. Britain was with Spain. And the rumor spread that the Thirteen North American Colonies were about to be chastised for their presumption of independence.

The bad news made royalist victories at home. Mariño lost Barcelona in Oriente; Barinas and many lesser towns in the West fell to the triumvirate of reaction: the priests, the Spanish officers and the hordes of marauding pardos and mestizos who, with Christ in their mouths, hated the Republic. Then Valencia fell to its own royalists; Monteverde cleared the roads

from Puerto Cabello to the plains, bringing in guns, taking out produce. Bolivar left Casa León in Caracas under the brilliant eye of his private secretary, Pedro Briceño Méndez, and toured his fast-shrinking provinces. While Caracas prepared for counterattack, improvising hospitals and fortifications among the ruins, he desperately tried to gather men, horses, lances — for the lack of muskets. His greatest want Bolivar could not meet: his people were not with him.

Out of the plains, from as far south as San Fernando on the Apure River, rode the royalist llaneros on their half-wild horses, burning, raping, killing; officered by grim-lipped Spaniards. They cut into the northern valleys of Aragua and El Tuy; they fanned west until the icy Andes barred them; they made juncture with Monteverde, who announced that veterans, fresh from their victories over Napoleon, were on the way in the great ships of Spain.

Bolivar returned to Caracas. He was calm. No more wordy proclamations. Instead, he reaffirmed the *guerra a muerte*.

He changed it. It had promised pardon to "Americans even if guilty." This was the ideological motive. But the dark tide of events transmuted what had been an idea into a passion. Now Americans, who fought against their country or who conspired with the enemy, would meet the same death as Spaniards.

Apart from his official communiqués, letters and speeches, there is little factual material for the portrait of Bolivar in these brief months. Legend is rife. It makes much of his liaison with Josefina (Pepita) Machado, the daughter of a creole family with lands, like the Bolivars, in El Tuy. Pepita was one of the liberated young women who flourish within the carapace of the Church in the highly cultured families of the Hispanic world. She flaunted her freedom from churchly morals, and her affair with the hero. She was reputedly brilliant and beautiful (there is no portrait). Bolivar's attachment to a woman who represented the mundane world he had left, and the vainglorious note in his manifestos upon his return to Caracas, suggest that certain elements of his nature

had not yet fused into the pure drive of his will. But now, as the frail state trembled and threatened to shatter, he grew hard and whole.

Monteverde turned from Valencia toward Caracas. At Trincheras and Bárbula, the patriots in swift thrusts bewildered him again and drove him back to Puerto Cabello. Monteverde was shot through the jaw; Girardot was killed, leading his men up the hill of Bárbula. Bolivar dramatized this loss, accompanying the body back to Caracas with ceremonial pomp. He exaggerated the importance of the Granadan to make propaganda: to stress the American unity of Venezuela and New Granada. Then Vicente Campo Elías, a new patriot star, trounced the royalist roughriders at Mosquiteros, and drove them back into their hinterland. The élan of the patriots was not lost. But as soon as one royalist army was destroyed, another sprang up.

The defensive campaign had lasted fifty days, during which Bolivar rode and fought fifteen hundred miles, at times spent twenty hours without respite in the saddle; and, when he dismounted, kept his secretaries busy, straining to co-ordinate the defense and the economy of the Republic. Monteverde came out again from Puerto Cabello and made contact with Bolivar a few miles from Taguanes, where, a few months before, the independents had won a battle.

This time Bolivar had not been quick enough to prevent the enemy's concentration. From Coro, Maracaibo, the plains of Barinas and Apure, and from the Orinoco, the royalist Venezuelans, stiffened by veterans from Spain, converged on the semi-desert hills of Araure. Bolivar knew he must fight, although he did not like the terrain, and was poorly informed of what faced him. (The royalism of the peasants of the region, halfway between Barquisimeto and the Andes, made scouting deadly, espionage impossible.) Santiago Mariño at last showed up from the east with his mounted men.

Bolivar sent five hundred infantry into the wooded top of a hill to test the enemy; they were annihilated; between five thousand and seven thousand royalists held the height. Boli-

var at once went forward with his main force, although weaker in position and mass. The Spanish general, surprised by this rash advance up the hill, divided his men and came down on both flanks to crush the enemy between them. Bolivar galloped to the rear, and led his reserves, to the last man, not against the flanks where he was expected, but straight up the center. At the top, the patriots turned before the royalists could re-form, and drove them into the trough of the hill where Bolivar had started. In six hours, the battle of Araure was over. So confused was the flight of the royalists that men from the south savannahs fled north toward Puerto Cabello, and the remnants of the army of the north scattered south. With his troops almost out of ammunition, Bolivar tried to cover the retreats. For days, fugitives were picked up, captured, put to the sword. The King's army in Venezuela had ceased to exist.

This was December 5, 1813. Within a month, in the mountains, in the plains and along the coast, Spain had armies again. It seemed that the American earth, incarnate in its confused peasants and roughriders, hated American independence. This confusion Bolivar knew was the main enemy.

THE BEAST OF SPAIN

CONFUSION found a god. He was José Tomás Rodríguez; but out of gratitude for a man of the plains named Bobes, who had befriended him, he called himself Boves. Loyalty was his monstrous virtue. Boves was born in Gijón of Asturias, a province of northern Spain which has much Celtic blood. And Boves was blond, blue-eyed: a strong, gangling body, a broad brow, a red beard, a beak of a nose and the gaze of an eagle. Very young, he had drifted from a smuggler's boat to Venezuela's plains, and traded in contraband hides. Up and down the llanos from Calabozo, south of Caracas, to Oriente, he wandered and became one of the people.—In 1810, he offered his

services to the Revolution. The commissioners, named by the Congress to screen recruits, identified Boves as a smuggler, and instead of taking him as a soldier condemned him to death. This was the first mistake; the second was worse: the humane judge commuted the sentence to a term in jail. For two years Boves behind bars in Calabozo learned to hate the Republic and to repent of his disloyalty to the King. In 1812, the bloody Spaniard Antoñanza took the town and freed Boves, who as a first assignment of his devotion to the King improvised a troop and pursued the republicans fleeing from the town. Among those Boves caught and killed was the judge who had commuted his death sentence. Swiftly now Boves gathered smugglers, fugitive slaves, illiterate llaneros. When his men, almost none of them white, stormed a hamlet or a ranch, the women were theirs, the booty was theirs; the white men and the children, Boves put to the sword, and this was Boves's share of the spoils. He loved the sight of agony and blood. Soon he was convinced he had a mission: to serve Spain's King by annihilating the creoles who had rebelled, and by delivering the land to the Indians, Negroes, pardos and mestizos. Boves hated his fellow whites as Hitler hated the Jews.

He was a virtuosic guerrilla captain. His army grew to ten thousand, all on horse. There were not more than eighty whites among them, and these only because they had convinced the leader that they shared his passion. Once Boves learned that two of his white officers had shown mercy to a family of creoles. He had the culprits brought to him and killed them with his own hand. His cruelty grew subtle. Instead of murdering his young white women captives after his men had raped them, he had them shipped to Arichuna, a malarial island on the Apure. There they could die, or live to become the mothers of bastards.

Boves was not involved in the royalist defeat of Araure. He headed an unbeaten host. His terror cowed the country. Whole villages fled at the rumor of his coming. He was sexually continent; he neither smoked nor drank to excess. But he had his pleasures. He liked to watch his Negroes, after they had

burned a rich house, take turns with the delicate daughter of the landlord; their naked bodies agleam with sweat, filthy with blood and manure. He liked to strip white men, bind them naked to a fence, pierce their bodies with a lance — enough to hurt, not kill, and keep them there in the tropic sun without water until they went mad and the vultures circled nearer. The man was, of course, a schizophrenic; split against his race, even against his own name. But he was able. And success soon brewed in him a delirium of glory. Monteverde, after his defeat at Araure, was replaced by a new captain general, Juan Manuel Cajigal. Boves refused to acknowledge him, and wrote the King a rambling, half-illiterate letter (still extant in the mountainous Archives of the Indies in Seville), explaining his sacred mission which barred his obedience to anyone but God and God's monarch.

Dr. José Ambrosio Llamozas, a good man, a devout subject, Presbyter and Vicar General of the royalist armies on Tierra Firme, voyaged all the way to Madrid in order to warn the King that Boves was destroying the white race in Venezuela. For months the gentle father tried in vain to see Fernando VII, who had just returned from his captivity and was busy tearing up the liberal constitution of Cadiz and every vestige of modern Spain — too busy to see Llamozas. The good doctor left his report to gather dust in the archives, and returned to the Indies.

Bolivar was watching Boves. The plains gave him unlimited men, horses, food; the ports gave him ammunition. The republican valleys were neglected; many of the slaves and freedmen were joining Boves, whose raids offered luxuries beyond the reach of labor. Bolivar knew the chief enemy . . . the confusion and ignorance of the people . . . was incarnate in Boves.

On January 2, 1814, Bolivar addressed the Constituent Assembly in the church (one of the few spared by the earthquake) of the Franciscans, a grey edifice, bare of the splendors of more magnificent cities. Most of the deputies were propertied men from Caracas or Mariño's Oriente; the Andes, the Jungle

and the plains were missing. Bolivar promised he would not sheath his sword until Colombia was free; he offered to resign as temporary chief of state and proposed Mariño to replace him. He said:

Compatriots, I have not come to oppress you with victorious arms; I have come to offer you the imperium of law, the guarantee of your sacred rights. No military despotism can make the people happy; the command I wield does not, except temporarily, suit a Republic. A fortunate soldier acquires no privilege to rule his country. He is the arbiter neither of its laws nor of their execution: he is merely the defender of its freedom. His glories should be submerged in those of the Republic; his ambition should be satisfied with the happiness of the people. I have vigorously defended your interests on the field of battle . . . your dignity and glory will always be dear to my heart; but the weight of authority oppresses me. I beseech you; free me of a burden beyond my strength. Elect your magistrates and representatives: a just government.

There were many replies: their substance, that the time was not yet for civil rule, and until the whole land was pacified Bolivar must remain in power. He again took the floor:

I will not usurp an authority that does not suit me. I say to you: Peoples, no individual except violently and illegitimately may possess your sovereignty. Flee from the land where one man rules; it is a land of slaves. You call me liberator of the Republic; I will not be its oppressor. My feelings have been in fearful conflict with my authority. . . . Compatriots, I confess that I anxiously look forward to the day when I can give up the power. Then, I hope you will free me of all but the soldier's right to fight in the ranks. . . . What I have done was for the glory of my country; let me do something for my own glory. . . . Nevertheless, I will not leave the helm, until peace reigns in the Republic.

Bolivar's wish to resign, insisted upon again and again through all his life, has raised doubt of his sincerity. According to his detractors, his motive was to entrench his power by having it bestowed explicitly, anew, each time he threatened to give it up. According to his adorers, he meant precisely what he said. The truth lies beyond and includes both versions. Bolivar was sure of his destiny: a task of leadership no one

could take from him; and it demanded power. That power demanded assent, if not yet by the people who were blind and confused, at least by the conscious minority. Since the goal was a *republic*, not a dictatorship, he, its instrument, must express the common will. But he must be effective, and too often the common will was confusion: therefore he must "correct" it. The paradox of power was poignant in this man who, at the first flush of it, said: "Flee from the land where one man rules." But there was more in Bolivar's constant "resignations." He lived in strain; as the colossal immensity of his mission bore down on him, his nerves cried out. He would do what he must; but he needed to know that he must! that destiny demanded *him*! The key to Bolivar's character is the fugal complexity of his nature. There was no single and no simple key. Every impulse inspired a response which in turn grew positive and dynamic, and the two contrapuntally produced a third. He was most calm in storm: the silent hurricane heart. He needed power, loved and lucidly feared and despised it. Even his physical habits revealed this dynamic contrast. His frail body, spurred by will and nervous suffering, matched the endurance of the toughest ranchman. From the fatigue of a hard day in the saddle, he relaxed into a night of intellectual labor — and of dancing. Most of his readings . . . military and political history, social philosophy, were tools of his work, but books of poetry accompanied his campaigns, and he loved to read it aloud. He did not smoke, he drank at most a glass of wine at dinner, meat (often the one food available) he found hard to digest. Probably his brief hours with women were his best respite from the pain and tension that never wholly left him.

Now the need to act, and with power, possessed him. Boves and his allies were literally tearing the Republic to pieces. Having condemned national rule by a soldier, Bolivar placed the nation under martial law. The amended *guerra a muerte* had offered pardon to "marauders and other individuals who on whatever pretext have borne arms against the Republic, and to deserters, at whatever date they deserted, provided *within one month* they present themselves, armed or without arms, to the

authorities. Now I make this pardon limitless, in order that at all times those who have been or are or who deem themselves delinquent may appear. And I hereby order all chiefs, military, civil and political, not to inflict death on any individual who offers himself up voluntarily, whatever his origin, state or condition." But all who were caught bearing arms or conspiring against the Republic must die.

Boves's answer a week later was to sweep north from his savannahs with seven thousand mounted pardos and mestizos, and to destroy three thousand republicans of Campo Elías. Bolivar rushed to Valencia and called on Mariño to hurry back from Oriente. In La Guaira remained eight hundred of the original four thousand Spanish prisoners, and almost no garrison to guard them. Conspiracy was rife, as Boves rose, and here were soldiers to help him. Bolivar recalled Puerto Cabello and instructed Arismendi to execute the eight hundred. Arismendi obeyed with appetite. And Boves poured into the northern valley.

Within sight of Bolivar's house at San Mateo, Campo Elías centered his troops; they were overwhelmed and Campo Elías was killed. Above Bolivar's sugar mill, the patriots had stored their precious ammunition. Boves stormed the height; Ricaurte, one of the four captains who had made the Campaña Admirable, fired the store to keep it from the enemy and died in the explosion. Boves trampled into the ancestral manor, scene of Bolivar's idyllic days with Rodríguez, and scratched his name (it is still there) on the door of the main hall. Then he swung east and south, circling Caracas; and here in his own plains where Oriente began, Mariño met him with his mounted men and threw him back — and withdrew to his own "country!" At this failure of Mariño to pursue, Bolivar was angry. He came out from Valencia, leaving Urdaneta with a mere skeleton force, and caught Boves in a place called Quinta Plantación de Tabaco, above the llanos, and whipped him again. Boves fell back toward his base, Calabozo. Critics have blamed Bolivar, as Bolivar blamed Mariño for not pursuing Boves. But unlike Mariño, Bolivar was weak in cavalry;

his chief strength was artillery which he could not transport from the mountains to the plains. His one hope was to throw Boves back from the high country and to rely on Mariño — or some other chief with horse, if he could find him.

Urdaneta, almost stripped of men, was besieged in Valencia by the Captain General Cajigal. Now came Mariño once more from Oriente with his mobile army; at La Victoria in the valley of Aragua, Bolivar met him for the first time. Mariño was indispensable — and a problem. He had earned his ascendancy in eastern Venezuela; he was the undisputed chief of good officers like Piar and Bermúdez, caudillos with followers of their own, and his loyalty to independence was firm. But he seemed willing or able to fight only where he ruled: this had been the motive of his return home without following up his first defeat of Boves. Boves, not the Captain General, was the greatest enemy, for Cajigal commanded chiefly Spaniards and Boves commanded Venezuelans. Mariño with his large resources in cavalry was the logical leader against Boves.

In battle tempo, Bolivar made an abrupt decision: as chief of state, he gave Mariño supreme command of the nation's fighting forces. Without a qualm, Mariño accepted and deployed his troops near the hills of Aroa. Bolivar himself feinted toward Puerto Cabello to keep Cajigal out of the way. Boves came up from the plains with his demonic thousands and ripped Mariño's patriots to tatters. Bolivar again took the command.

He had sent Pedro Gual to Barbados to buy arms at any price from the British. Gual returned empty-handed. It was May, the time of rains. Cajigal with six thousand troops trained, armed, clothed against the weather, moved up the precipitous road from Puerto Cabello to Valencia; Boves, recovered from a slight wound in Calabozo, moved north with his seven thousand to close the iron vise that would finally strangle the Republic. Bolivar knew that his sole chance was to dispose of Cajigal before Boves came in. He depleted the garrisons even of Caracas and with every man he could muster drove his army (about five thousand), miserably clad, poorly armed, not

shod at all, through the torrential rains toward the Spaniards. As they approached the open plain of Carabobo, where the mounted men of Boves would normally converge with the troops, predominantly infantry, of Cajigal (each army alone larger and better equipped than all the independents), a regiment of Mariño mutinied and turned about-face toward home. Bolivar, the frail, tense little man who had already spent twenty hours in the saddle, pursued the mutineers with a strong force, caught up with them, shot every fifth man, and sent the others back toward battle.

Cajigal had stationed his army on the high ground which crescents the plain from the south; his artillery was deployed to cover all approaches. Bolivar ordered Mariño and Ribas against the hill. The Spanish left, reinforced by two squadrons hidden from Bolivar's reconnaissance, formed in three columns to flank the patriot right. They broke through. Bolivar brought in his cavalry reserves and charged them at the center up the hill. The impact demoralized the Spanish core and the artillery. The republicans took eleven hundred unhurt prisoners. A thousand remained wounded or dead on the field, and the rest fled. It was a great victory, this first battle of Carabobo. But Boves was untouched. Two weeks later, he appeared at La Puerta, gateway between his plains and the republican valleys. He had five thousand fresh horsemen and three thousand foot. He met the little army of Bolivar.

The troops which had fought hard at Carabobo flinched before the rough-riding Venezuelans of Boves. They had won many battles; they had had time to rest since the last victory; yet a subtle discouragement was greyly in them. It infected their leaders: Ribas, Mariño, even Bolivar. They fled in disorder from the impact of Boves, the road to Caracas lay open.

It is not known why Boves did not at once consume the remaining miles to the capital. He would have found the city prostrate in confusion; he might even have laid hands on Bolivar. He delayed, and when after several days he got to Caracas, twenty thousand men, women and children, the conspicu-

ous republicans, were already on the dolorous road east to Barcelona. At the entrance to the city, Boves was met by the Marqués de Casa León. This phenomenal man, who had served the King, Miranda, Monteverde and Bolivar . . . and all in good faith! . . . now made himself indispensable to Boves, who appointed him civil governor of the city. The maniacal hater of whites was tamed — and thousands owed their lives to Casa León. Boves sent a message to Captain General Cajigal in Puerto Cabello: "I have recovered the arms and honors of the Spanish flag which Your Excellency lost at Carabobo." He named himself "Governor of this Province, President of the Royal Audiencia, Captain General and Political Chief of Venezuela, Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish Army." (Possibly the white gentry of Caracas were spared because Boves was cowed into good behavior by the titles he had given himself.) Cajigal escaped to Puerto Rico.

Bolivar fled with the twenty thousand. The last days in Caracas had destroyed his prestige with his power. The Congress attacked him; he offered again to resign, but no one cared or dared to take his place: who wanted to lead a lost cause? he remained nominal chief of the agonizing nation. The way to Barcelona was two hundred and fifty miles of rock and thorn, heat and drought. Marauders made sudden sallies from the mountains; Bolivar, Ribas and Mariño, with fourteen hundred soldiers, the relicts of the defeat at La Puerta, defended the women and the children. The folk gave small attention to Bolivar; he was now one of them. Children took turns on his saddle. But he was making his plans. South of Barcelona, in a broad wooded plain, was a town, Villa de Aragua (not to be confused with Bolivar's valley of Aragua west of Caracas). There, while the refugees and Mariño went on, Bolivar found Bermúdez. Together they had about three thousand men. Morales, the best and one of the most savage of the officers of Boves, was coming up with an army of over seven thousand, largely veterans of the victory of La Puerta. Bolivar proposed that they ambush their troops in the wood at the approach to

the town, which was strictly limited by the winding river. When the enemy came crowding down the narrow passage, the three thousand would leap on them. It was a desperate scheme . . . the kind that had succeeded with Bolivar. But Bermúdez, who was Mariño's man, would have none of it, and stayed inside the town, despite Bolivar's pointing out that an inferior force thus shut in, without hope of help, was trapped. He stationed his own thin troops at the approach, and rushed at the enemy from the wood; but his force was too light and he was beaten off. Flying the flag of Boves, a black field with borders of white skulls, Morales's men entered the town. They spared no prisoners. Of the ten thousand who fought that futile day, four thousand seven hundred died: three thousand seven hundred for the Republic, one thousand for the King — all of them Venezuelans.

Bolivar galloped to Barcelona and warned the refugees of the new defeat and the new threat. They must go farther east, to Cumaná. As he saw the faces of the women and children, so tortured with anguish and fatigue that the old could not be distinguished from the young, he may well have thought that his bitter cup was full. If so, he was mistaken. . . .

In Caracas, he had ordered the churches stripped of their last silver: a poor treasure compared to what it would have been in Mexico, Lima, Quito, but worth perhaps a hundred thousand pesos, which would help to equip a fresh army. Mariño had the chests, and when he reached Cumaná he entrusted them to Giuseppi Bianchi, a sea captain, with orders to hide the treasure in his boat and wait.

Bianchi was typical of the "brethren of the coast" who for centuries had fished in the Caribbean's troubled waters. The great pirate days were over, when Sir Henry Morgan, Sir Francis Drake, L'Ollonais, William Dampier, Bartholomew Portuguese, Mansvelt and Sharp, commanding thousands of buccaneers, hundreds of boats, and (not too secretly) sponsored by the governments of London, Amsterdam and Paris, performed their atrocities in the grand manner. The epigones of these

magnates of loot and murder were smaller men in little vessels . . . at most two lateens or lugsails with a jib . . . but they were of the same rascality and the same skills; and the Hispano-Americans were dependent on them when they put to sea, for the Spaniards had jealously kept the maritime trade in their own hands. Bianchi was one of the skippers hired for a price by Mariño for his "navy."

Bolivar reached Cumaná, which lies before a sandy bay beneath a barren hill; and sat down with Mariño at table. They were told, as they ate, that Bianchi had raised sail and was off with the treasure. They rushed to the boat and boarded it. Bianchi refused to remain, or to give up the chests. The government, he said, owed him much money; he had decided to pay himself. The two generals refused to go ashore without the silver, and the sloop carried them out to sea. They had one good card against Bianchi. He would try to sell his loot at some British island, where rules were strict against receiving stolen goods (which might get England into trouble with an ally). Bianchi had no papers. Bolivar offered him a certificate of ownership for one-third the plate, if he relinquished the balance. The paper was drawn up and signed, as good wind and current brought them before Pampatar, a port of Margarita, where Bolivar and Mariño hoped to disembark with their share.

A shot crossed their bow to halt them; Manuel Piar, in command of Pampatar, sent word to his superior officers, Bolivar and Mariño, that they could not land; their vessel could not take on water and supplies; they must put about at once, or the next shot would sink them. Piar had plans of his own. . . .

With great reluctance, Bianchi was persuaded to drop his unwelcome passengers on the mainland, not at some other port of Margarita. The most accessible place was Carúpano, a fishing village southeast of Pampatar. And here, after the haggling with a piratical sailor and the mutiny of Piar, Bolivar touched the depth of humiliation. His uncle Ribas was in Carúpano with the one remaining republican force. He came up to

Bolívar and Mariño in cold fury; accused them of desertion and absconding with national funds, declared himself and Piar the new chiefs of western and eastern Venezuela, and thrust Bolívar and Mariño into prison.

José Félix Ribas was the perfect creole gentleman. Faithful to the Republic, in the Campaña Admirable he had obeyed Bolívar, although his nephew's sudden rise must have amazed him; the relative's too-close view probably found it hard to recognize a hero in the boy his wife Josefa had nursed. Now, when disaster had come, it was easy for the older man to convince himself against Bolívar.

How long the two chiefs remained confined is unknown; not many days. Bolívar's "jail" was a fisherman's hut, a single room with a window of wood bars gracefully protruding like a bird cage to the street and a view of the sea. The floor was clay, the hearth for cooking was without a chimney, there may have been a hammock for bed, and a clumsy wooden table.

Ribas was immediately gone, recruiting for the army with which he hoped to destroy Boves. Bolívar obtained paper and ink from his guard, and wrote a message to his people.

" . . . the fortune of arms chose me to break your chains, but also to be the instrument of your affliction. I brought you freedom and peace; and in my pursuit of them war came with me, slavery came with me. . . . "

Liberating armies are irresistible against Spain; but, he asks, when *Americans* rise against us? Free institutions are void if the people do not desire to be free. For the calamity of Venezuela, he blames Venezuela. He has not been guiltless of errors; but the essence of the catastrophe is in the people. On his own conduct, he will take the judgment of the Congress of New Granada; he is going to report to the men who sent him. But he will be back. Let the people not despair; let them learn to love freedom. . . .

It is a remarkable document, written in a prose somberly dark, roundly muscular, and reserved: a prose of stern tender-

ness, like the reproof and the final heartening of a father. Love is in it. The fire of the disaster, the worse-searing humiliation of the latter days (Bianchi, Piar, Ribas), have tempered Bolivar. In his obscure fisherman's hut, in his land almost totally submerged again by hated Spain, with Boves and his Venezuelans destroying soul and body of his people, Bolivar knew that his message would find few immediate readers. He is writing for the record. He has not the slightest doubt that there will be a record.

It must have been simple for Bolivar and Mariño, men of natural ascendancy, to persuade their guards to let them go. At once, alone, Bolivar sailed for Cartagena, to give his report to the Congress in Tunja, and to begin again.

A few days later, Piar came to Carúpano with two hundred men, and proclaimed himself chief of Oriente. What would he have done, if he had found Bolivar?

Ribas with a fresh army met Boves and seven thousand horsemen, and was defeated at Urica in a bloody battle. Boves, victorious, was killed: the maniacal foe of the white race met his death at the hand of an unnamed patriot Negro. The fate of Ribas was no less ironic. A slave, freed by the republicans, betrayed him after the battle, and turned him over to the Spaniards. The Spaniards cut off the handsome Spanish head from the slim, well-groomed body: the long head with barbered sideburns and curled black hair, with the petulant mouth, the delicate-bridged nose, the dark clouded eyes. First they fried the head in oil to preserve its traditional features, then they mounted it on a pike and sent it to be displayed in the plaza of Caracas.

Of the five brilliant captains who had fought with Bolivar the thousand miles from the Magdalena to Caracas: Ribas, Girardot, Ricaurte, Campo Elías and Urdaneta, all but the last were dead; and Bolivar was again an exile.

N A D I R

BOLIVAR's voyage from Carúpano back to Cartagena bespoke the storm of his world. Tempest drove the boat six days. When the waves calmed, they sighted and, like pirates, boarded a merchantship from Spain. Its booty was rich; they transferred part of their crew to sail it along with them. But a Spanish man-of-war strode toward them, all square sails flush with power; they had to abandon their prize, and barely ducked to safety under the forts of Cartagena.

At once, Bolivar continued by sampan up the Magdalena and across country to Tunja. He gave his report. The Confederation was tottering: Cundinamarca, province of Bogotá, remained outside and hostile; Cartagena, where Castillo, Bolivar's old enemy, now ruled, was insubordinate. But Camillo Torres, President of the Congress, had deep faith in Bolivar. "The Republic of Venezuela," he answered Bolivar's account of its destruction, "is not dead. It is here, in your person."

They made him General of the armed forces of the Union; perhaps he could bring harmony to the warring factions. Bolivar learned that Rafael Urdaneta had escaped to the Andes of New Granada with a compact force of Venezuelan veterans. Bolivar wrote him at once; he was coming, he said, to take over the command. This was presumption; Urdaneta in New Granada owed nothing to his former chief of Venezuela. But Urdaneta, pure of ambition, fiercely loyal, welcomed Bolivar. Together they marched to Bogotá. They won the stubborn centralists; and with joy Bolivar wrote to Camillo Torres and the Congress in Tunja to return to the ancient capital of the Kingdom of New Granada. The civil war between centralist and federalist was over!

Cartagena and Castillo . . . the sorest problem . . . remained. Leaving Urdaneta in Bogotá, Bolivar turned to the north. Santa Marta must be seized from the royalists, and Cartagena which alone could win it would be reabsorbed by the act into the Union. The Spaniards, Bolivar wrote to Castillo in friend-

liest terms, would soon land twenty thousand veterans in Venezuela, and would march west to reconquer New Granada. The one hope was first to unify the countries. The means: an offensive from Cartagena to Santa Marta and along the coast to Maracaibo and Coro. This would bring the coastal Andes of Venezuela again into republican hands; the Spaniards would be outflanked, New Granada would be safe, Venezuela could be retaken. The watchword was speed! He, Bolivar, was coming down the river. Let Cartagena assemble troops, supplies, ships and money. He went into details about the money.

Castillo read with rage these orders from the man he hated: the upstart, the foreigner, the *failure* in Venezuela, who signed himself Commander-in-chief of the armies of the Union! Castillo's reply was to publish a pamphlet that accused Bolivar of every public folly and every private sin. Bolivar read the libel when he was halfway down the river in Mompox, waiting with his fresh-uniformed army for permission from the authorities in Cartagena to enter their province. He asked Torres to answer for the honor of the Union which had appointed him General of its armies. Torres replied with a noble public letter so involved in style that only an intellectual like himself could read it. Bolivar wrote to Castillo; he pleaded for peace in the common cause; he foretold the threat if Cartagena stopped instead of leading his campaign for Santa Marta; he offered to resign, to fight in the ranks. . . . He got no answer.

Mompox was a malarial town in the hot muck of the Magdalena; Bolivar's splendid new army, forced to wait, began to dissolve in disease and desertions. Pedro Gual, who had already served Bolivar, offered to mediate with Castillo. Bolivar leaped at the chance. He wrote to Gual: "To understand a revolution and its actors, it is necessary to observe from very close and to judge from very far: extremes which it is hard to bring together." He counted on Gual. He would do anything, he told him, to appease Castillo. "I would treat — I don't say with Castillo who after all is on our side: I would treat with Fernando VII himself, for the freedom of our Republic. On my word of honor I say to you, dear Gual, that if Brigadier Castillo

wants my friendship he shall have it; and as gauge of my sincerity, I will sign a communiqué, official or confidential, to be made public, which will ascribe the scandalous calumnies *both of us* have suffered to errors of misinformation, unjust passion and divergent views. In a word, let him satisfy me, and I will satisfy him."

His satisfaction, Bolivar repeated, meant exclusively that his army be allowed to pass, with Cartagena's help, through Cartagena's province in order to fight the enemies of American independence.

Gual proposed a committee of arbitration; Bolivar accepted, and named as his representatives two members of Castillo's family in Cartagena. Castillo refused. Gual then proposed a personal meeting of the two; Castillo invited Bolivar to proceed alone to Cartagena. Bolivar smelled treachery, and suggested a site halfway between them. He had moved down the river in order to extricate his men from the malarial sloughs of Mompo; they were now in Barranca — where he had begun with seventy soldiers. Castillo again declined, and demanded that Bolivar retire at once with his army to Ocaña in the mountains. Castillo would provide the itinerary of the retreat; Bolivar must swerve from it neither to left nor right. He must leave all munitions behind; he must disband his Venezuelans who were "odious," he said, to the Granadans; these he must at once turn over to the Granadan Coloney Vélez. Under such terms, Castillo might agree to confer with the man whom his Congress had named Captain General of the armed forces of the Union! Bolivar's reply was to move forward. He occupied La Popa, the hill beyond the great Fort of Cartagena. Castillo's guns raked the terrain and the convent; Bolivar returned no fire.

Of course, the royalists were on the offensive again. They advanced up the river and took Barranquilla; they fanned east to Ocaña. Bolivar sent Gual, his Secretary, and Miramón, the commissioner of the Congress, with a final proposal: he would attack Santa Marta by sea and leave the attack by land entirely to Castillo. How could Castillo refuse these terms, which re-

moved Bolivar from the soil of the province? And Castillo accepted — with an amendment which spelled Bolivar's sure destruction. Bolivar must go, said the Brigadier, not by sea but by land; by a circuitous; impossible route east through the jungle of the Dupar valley. Bolivar would be trapped in a mortiferous glade between the glaciated Sierra on one flank and Castillo on the other.

Bolivar gathered his men; he had come to a decision. He said:

Soldiers: the general government of New Granada placed me at your head that we might break the chains which enslave our brothers in Santa Marta, Maracaibo, Coro, Caracas. Venezuelans: you were to return to your lands; Granadans: you were to win fresh laurels. But fortune and glory have foundered. Your arms have overthrown no tyrants; instead, they have been stained with the blood of brothers.

The salvation of the army, he explained, demanded his separation from it. Perhaps, with him out of the way, the soldiers of American independence would fight again . . . not each other, but for American independence.

On May 9, 1815, Bolivar boarded a British vessel and sailed for the British island of Jamaica.

To anticipate: Bolivar's prophecies came true. A year earlier, Fernando VII, was monarch again in Madrid; confident that the tide of liberalism and revolution had ebbed forever, he instructed his lieutenants in America to be "clement and indulgent," in order to heal the "discord between brothers, caused by the absence of their father." Obscure Venezuela had given the worst trouble. Therefore on February 18, 1815, an army of fifteen thousand veterans of the Napoleonic Wars sailed from Cadiz in a great fleet to bring the King's "clemency and indulgence" to the Venezuelans and Granadans. The General of the mighty expedition was Pablo Morillo with the title of "Commander of the Pacifying Army." After his detailed instructions to this great royal servant who had risen from the humblest rank in the war with Napoleon, the King

added a final clause: "Since the success of the expedition and the peace of the Captaincy General are subject to the contingencies of distance, His Majesty concedes to the General-in-chief full faculty *to change these instructions, in part or in their entirety.*

In April, Morillo occupied Margarita, the last free soil in Venezuela. By July (three months after Bolivar's flight to Jamaica), Morillo was ready for New Granada. He left behind in Caracas an army of six thousand Spanish veterans and ten thousand Venezuelans; with ten thousand Spanish and three thousand American troops, he sailed for Cartagena.

Before the year's end, Cartagena had fallen. Morillo did not overlook the final clause of His Majesty's instructions which gave him a free hand. All the soldiers in the great citadel were shot, except Bolivar's enemy, Manuel Castillo, who was hanged. The army sailed slowly up the Magdalena and marched across to Bogotá. There, six hundred leading citizens were executed, including Camillo Torres, President of the Union, and the nation's greatest scientist, Francisco José Caldas, whose crime was that he was concerned with America's mankind as well as with its fauna and flora. All New Granada, all Venezuela, were again Spanish. In Venezuela, one quarter of the million inhabitants were dead. Everywhere the condition of the people was worse than it had been six years before, when the minority rebelled.

V

The Father

"The heart of the American people is absolutely independent."

THE JAMAICAN LETTERS

THIS DEPTH was still by many months in the future when Bolivar, retreating from New Granada, foresaw it. Already on the British ship that carried him to Kingston, he felt his separation. His America lay at the stern: his unborn Colombia, Peru, Chile, the vast horizons of La Plata; it circled west of him: Guatemala, Mexico; its islands to the north and east enclosed the Caribbean. He called it "half the world," and he loved it (the other half was Europe and the United States). In Jamaica, he felt the disparate will of Britain. The economic system resembled that of Spain's islands. Jamaica had been the center of England's slave-trade, recently abolished. Three hundred thousand Negroes raised the coffee, cacao, sugar and indigo; with the thousands of mulattos, distilled the rum, manned the mills, and served the handful of English masters. But here the native Indians, the Arawaks, were not as in Spain's kingdoms sullen or submissive; they were *gone*. Even in the few surviving, their spirit was absent. The black folk were neither African nor American; a blight made them culturally sterile. British rule, he saw, cut off the folk from their roots, insulated caste from caste, bleached emotion, intellect and spirit. The Spaniards grasped and maimed, but married with America and brought forth life, although the life was chaos. In the loveless

air of Kingston, Bolivar knew with poignance his own love; and that love was destiny.

For his purpose, he felt sure of the British. He had lost hope of help from the United States, absorbed in their own continent and already hankering after Spanish lands: Cuba, Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico. But the British would have the imagination to win the trade of "half the world." The merchants in Jamaica heartened him. Since they were progressive and generous and true to their word, surely their mercantile government in London would be likewise! They lent him money—he had come penniless—particularly Maxwell Hyslop, who deserves to be remembered. Bolivar wrote long briefs to Sir Richard Wellesley, whom he had met on his mission to London, statistically analyzing the advantages for the City, if America were free: the compound interest that a small investment in men, ships, arms, would earn. He offered to go to London to explain. He repeated his arguments to the Duke of Manchester, the Governor of Jamaica.

He was not invited to London; the kindness of individual Englishmen led to nothing, except that it helped keep him alive.

He wrote long, detailed reports to the Congress of New Granada, warning them that a great Spanish army would soon invade them, unless it were stopped in Venezuela. And with no men to command, as previously in Cartagena he became a man of letters. For the local *Royal Gazette*, he wrote a long essay which he called "*Answer of a South American to a Gentleman of this Island*": a reply to the current low quotation, on the world stock market, of American independence. He had the classic experience of the unconsecrated author; his eight-thousand-word essay was rejected as too long. After his death, its original unpublished manuscript was found among his papers.

Bolivar wielded several styles. His proclamations to soldiers and peasants were grandiloquent, glaring with primary colors; his memorials to diplomats and men of business were sinuous and cool; his letters to his family were precise, factual, yet

tender. In the Jamaican essay, analysis, vision and love come together to produce a great writing: a logic like Montesquieu's, a structural perspective like Gibbon's, are warmed by American blood.

Bolivar begins with a swift sketch of Spain's three centuries in the New World, an unjust picture which nevertheless establishes a truth: that there *are* Americans, and that Americans are not, and never were, the same as Spaniards. "Greater is the hatred the Peninsula has inspired [in us] than the ocean that divides us. Less difficult to bind the two continents in body, than to reconcile the spirits of the two nations." America fights with desperate anger, because it has already tasted freedom. Spain, once a mother, has become the stepmother. "Because victories have been partial is no reason to mistrust our fortune." For America Hispana is one; when it achieves the consciousness of unity, it will be invincible. He gives details of the great struggle, in Buenos Aires, in Chile, in Peru, "the most corrupt and submissive"; in "heroic, unfortunate Venezuela," in Mexico, where already a million of the eight million have perished; in Cuba and Puerto Rico where, Bolivar foretells, independence cannot come for a long time. From the parts, the focus shifts to the whole: the wealth in men, the vast potential of resources, the stupid failure of foreign aid. "Even our brothers to the North have held aloof, indifferent spectators . . . we have been abandoned by the entire world; no foreign nation has guided us with wisdom and experience or defended us with arms or nourished us with its resources." The argument modulates to law: "The Emperor Carlos made a pact with the conquistadores . . ." a feudal pact with vassals, who were to enjoy full freedom and full rights of Christian nations. That pact was at once cruelly broken. Its basis, moreover (here Bolivar leans on Las Casas), was a Christian responsibility toward all Americans. Already in 1550 the great Padre dared to state that Spain had voided her rights to America as a ward granted by the Pope. Spain's rule has been illegal; but her tyranny in America is unique. America has been clamped and held in an unnatural infancy. The duress of Oriental

tyrants is more humane: it is a Turk who oppresses Turks, a Mongol who oppresses Mongols; and the underlords are native. But in America, cries Bolivar, aliens from across a sea send aliens to rule us!

Skillfully Bolivar has strengthened the sympathies of the reader to withstand the inauspicious facts in this nadir of 1815, when the liberator of a nonexistent nation writes at an exile's desk in a lodging house:

. . . Thus we are deprived even of active tyranny . . . we have not been permitted even tyranny upon ourselves, a natural step toward the will and method of achieving freedom. Freedom will be long and devious in coming to the people of meridional America, so cruelly deprived and deformed in their natural evolution.

He considers forms of government: "The most perfect . . . the federal . . . will not work." The federalist flights in Venezuela and New Granada "have met the fate of Icarus whose wings melted and who fell in the abyss." Monarchy in America will not work; he gives the reasons. A compromise is needed: "a paternal executive, not hereditary but if possible for life, to counterpoise the turbulent inconsistencies of the elected parliament." America as one federated nation is a fair and valuable dream: the capital perhaps in Panama "with its canals" joining the seas, perhaps in Mexico, or a new city on rich Lake Maracaibo named Las Casas to honor the heroic and profound Defender of the Indians. But this promise and goal is for a remote future. America will probably divide into "seventeen republics . . . eighteen if Brazil is included." This was prophecy, but it was also policy: Britain must not be frightened by the prospect of helping a new Colossus rise across the ocean. Bolivar proceeds to draw the portraits of the republics. . . . For Argentina he foresees military, then oligarchic rule; for Mexico a long dictatorship; for Chile, stable constitutional law and progress; "Peru, on the contrary, has two elements that are hostile to any just and liberal regime: gold and slaves. The first corrupts, the second is corruption. . . ." Exact pictures of the century beyond Bolivar.

Although the adverse conditions are everywhere, he fears them most in Lima, capital of Spain's noblest kingdom. "I presume the rich [of Peru] will not tolerate democracy, nor will the slaves and the freemen of mixed blood tolerate aristocracy . . . It will be hard for Peru to recover independence." Note the word "recover." He is referring to Peru's old freedom under the Incas; and he is uncannily foreseeing his own tragic struggle in the future. Central America, he writes, should federate. (It did, and it will again.) For Venezuela and New Granada, he predicts the great union of Colombia. But "they may separate; and if they do, it will be New Granada that will grow strong"; another precision of what was to be. On the future of a "separate Venezuela," he is silent. Finally, he returns to his dream of the great American Federation. But what, he asks, could hold it together except tyranny? Small republics alone survive, he says, the exception being Rome which solved the paradox by being a republic at home, an empire abroad — until the empire swallowed the republic. His intellect pleads for small, free nations; his heart fears for them as weak, and yearns after the great Union. His heart has the last word. . . .

Bolívar's life in Jamaica was miserable. He complains of his landlady whose exorbitant charge for his small room he cannot always meet. He is forced to beg of Hyslop. "If you fail me, nothing is for me but to end my days." He can face the tragic problems of his great task, which is his destiny, with more ease than the mean hours of a gentleman without money. (He has turned his estates over to his sisters and the three children of his brother as he had planned, making María Antonia the trustee. She too has freed her slaves . . . three hundred . . . in order that they may enlist in the republican army.)

At last, the landlady's tyranny is too much for him, and he rents another room. This day, a friend, Félix Anestoy, shows up from Cartagena. Bolívar lends him his hammock in his old room. (There is no bed.) The Negro servant of the house steals in at midnight and plunges his knife in the sleeping

body. In the morning, Anestoy is found dead. Bolivar conducts the examination of the murderer, who confesses that he was paid by Spanish agents on the island to kill Bolivar. Gossiping historians (with no evidence) insist that Bolivar spent the night, not in his new quarters but with a woman (to feed the legend that it was Woman who saved him). The event is possible — and unimportant; it certainly does not prove another point of legend: that Bolivar was "*couvert de femmes*." He was a moderate man, except in his central passion. But to have refrained entirely from sexual relations would have marked him as abnormal in that tropical land, and in his Hispanic world which regarded fornication as a venial sin, far more pardonable than the sin of pride or despair, of both of which Bolivar was more guilty.

He walked the quiet streets of the town, forcing himself to know his failures and his people's failures; watching the success of the simplified British method of rule by emotional exclusion; realizing the far greater challenge of his will to forge an America of all men, all castes and colors. He gazed from the port where the spiritually neutral Negroes toiled, toward the confusion of his own land. At times, his spirit flinched; his arm, helpless to strike at the enemy, might strike against himself. Not for long. He observed himself with that detachment which had come to him on the way to Curaçao; and what he found confirmed him. The splendor of the Campaña Admirable, of the triumphs of Caracas and Bogotá, made a hard light in which to behold his present days: quarrels with the landlady, "accursed woman," he called her; hagglings with the pawnbroker to whom he sold his watch; even the threat of death ignobled at the foul hand of a bribed servant — but his sense of destiny was solid, he could *look at it* as he could touch his body. Forced to be idle, he made work for himself; exacerbated by the lack of luxuries and comforts to which he had grown used, in Caracas, Madrid, Paris, he trained himself to do without them. He kept on dunning his British friends and the statesmen in London, like a debtor who insists on the delivery of the riches of Ophir. He kept on writing to Cartagena, as if

the stupid treason of Castillo were a mist long-since dissolved in the sun of their common cause. When news came of Napoleon's escape from Elba, he rushed a warning to the Congress in Bogotá. Napoleon, he predicted, if he failed in France, might try to recoup his fortunes in the United States. He would be driven out if he dared come; and would then turn to Mexico or Caracas. At their peril, Bolivar warned, would America receive him! As usual, his guess was correct. Years later, when the events of "the Hundred Days" were public, it became known that Napoleon had considered going to the United States; if not admitted, he might try Mexico or Caracas, and he had talked it over with Lavallette, his aide-de-camp. But not only foresight spoke in Bolivar's warning; in his miserable room on a British island, he reacted to his intuition as if his own leadership were challenged by Napoleon, the world figure. His detachment made him proud — and aware of his pride, and of its danger.

His technic of resistance to adversity in all its phases (practiced as if he were drilling himself for future battles) moved him to write another article, a "postscript" to the rejected one; and this, being shorter, the *Royal Gazette* published. It probes the soul of his people: "Our discords have their origin in two most copious sources of political failure: ignorance and weakness . . ." and Spain for three hundred years had methodically fomented both! The Americans, he writes, "have gone through three centuries *blinded*." A third article followed, and was published, on the problem of race. No single race, Bolivar declares, can ever rule America Hispana. And this, despite the submissiveness of the African, the superstitious respect of the Indian for the white man, and the fact that *even among themselves* the Indians have no lust to rule. This was deep penetration for an age when folk psychology was not yet studied. The ego of the Indian is indeed communal, not individual. But the social dimension within the Indian's will, although it militates against domination by and for the self, is also a defense against permanent domination by others. This, Bolivar saw. Despite Boves, he writes, there has been no true race war in Venezuela.

The marauders are poor and oppressed; they are also men of color; the rich oppressors are white; the civil conflict is essentially economic. Clear away the mystification of the King, indoctrinate the idea of the Nation, and the men of color will unite with the creoles. Bolivar boldly states that this was happening; it was — in the remote savannahs. But Bolivar, who gave it as fact, did not yet know it.

"I haven't a penny," he wrote to Hyslop. "I've sold my last piece of personal silver. . . ." ¹ Then came a strong friend. . . .

B R I Ó N

Luis Brión was born in Curaçao, the year before Bolivar. His father, a rich Dutch armourer, sent him to school in Holland and, at his own request, to the United States where he learned navigation and democracy. In 1811, he offered his services to Venezuela. By 1814, he had made his own fortune, trading with his own boats in that paradise of mercantile capitalism, the Caribbean, where no man of business survived who could not wield musket and cutlass. His flagship was *The Intrepid Bolivar*, and he first met his idol in Cartagena. The author of *Memoirs of an Officer in the British Legion* described Brión as "about five feet six, of delicate but muscular build . . . very dark with long black moustaches; his face resembled that of the Israelites greatly, and he was much pock-marked." Brión's enemies called him a Jew; his physique was certainly not the typical Dutchman's; but the register of the Catholic church in Willemstad vouches for the Christian legitimacy of his parents.

Morillo, the new Captain General of Venezuela, had by now advanced west, as Bolivar foretold, and was besieging Cartagena. Brión's lithe barques ran the blockade; he was in and out of Kingston constantly, and brought Bolivar news of Tierra Firme. The exile and the businessman grew close; and when

¹ His two sisters and their families were also in need, and Dr. Mordecai Ricardo of Curaçao who had financed Bolivar's trip from that island to Cartagena provided for them. In a letter to Ricardo dated Kingston, November 7, 1815, Bolivar mentions several previous letters (which were lost) and thanks him for helping "my two unfortunate sisters," and for not losing faith in him, at this low ebb of his fortunes.

Brión was away, Bolivar opened his heart to him in letters. "*Estoy viviendo en la incertidumbre y la miseria*," he wrote him. "I live in suspense and poverty." The uncertainty came first, because the pain of it was greater. But Brión brought good news to the man stubbornly holding out against depression: Castillo, his enemy, had been replaced as commandant of besieged Cartagena by the Venezuelan Bermúdez. This meant that the officers who backed Castillo against Bolivar saw their mistake. Bermúdez, the man of Santiago Mariño, was difficult, headstrong — as Bolivar had learned at the battle near Barcelona. But the change was a good omen. Brión reported that they were saying in the streets that Bolivar alone could save Cartagena. Brión stood by with his fleet and was collecting guns from every open port. Now came a direct bid to Bolivar from the besieged city. Brión was ready to smuggle him in; surely Bolivar was ready to go? He delayed; he sent involved hesitant letters. To the men commissioned by the government of Cartagena to summon him, he replied:

Although I have not the least confidence in myself, although the immense responsibility with which you honor me frightens me, despite the dangers fate has in store . . . I am ready to serve my country. If Cartagena calls, I will fly to defend her or to be buried in her ruins.

But while public opinion is not in accord, my presence might bring conflict and evil. I could do no good, even if my capacities permitted.

I can never sufficiently express my satisfaction at this happy chance to show my true feelings to men who once called themselves my enemies, although I was never theirs. . . . No American can be my foe, even if he fights me under the flag of a tyrant . . . I swear on my word of honor that I have forgotten the offenses . . . that any idea of revenge is absent from my heart.

Much protestation, much circumlocution, but never the clear word: "*I come!*" What was amiss with Bolivar? Cartagena called, and Cartagena was the logical port of entry, since Morillo solidly held all Venezuela. Yet instinctively Bolivar felt that the place was not right. He acquiesced, he began his

preparations to leave; but he did not hurry . . . he was waiting. . . .

On December 18, 1815, he sailed with a few officers on Bríón's sloop, *La Popa*. They pointed toward Cartagena, together with several other boats laden with grain for the starved city, and with soldiers. Meantime the siege had hardened, as Morillo with fresh troops sealed the land approaches. Two thousand of the defenders, feeling the city lost, decided to escape with their arms to Haiti or Jamaica. They got to the open sea, when Morillo broke into the walled town. His royalist spies within the gates told him of the two thousand soldiers, and their route, and that Bolivar at that moment was on his way to Cartagena. At once, the Spaniard sent his ships to overtake the fugitives; above all, to seize Bolivar. All but six hundred of the two thousand were caught on the high seas and put to the sword. But among the vessels that managed to slip away was *El Republicano*. It met Bolivar's boat, a full day's journey south of Kingston, and gave the news: Cartagena was lost and the Spaniards were hunting for him. If he had sailed on, he would have sailed into the trap! Now Bolivar had the reason for his unreasonable hesitations. Destiny had spoken again; and he heard. His vessel turned about from south to northeast, for Haiti.

H A I T I

HAITI was in the hands of the slaves, children of men and women trapped like beasts during three hundred years in their African homes, and freighted in foul ship-bottoms to the island. In darkness and degradation they had labored the soil of Haiti to bear fruit for their masters; and from their servitude, as from a loam, the human spirit sprang. The French had driven out the Spaniards; now the slaves drove out the French. Toussaint l'Ouverture, who victoriously led his brother bondmen against the soldiers of Napoleon, strove to move his people not as a wronged race seeking retribution but as men seeking

freedom. But his lieutenants and successors could not sustain this lofty level; they tasted power and were drunk with it. In the north, in his fantastic palace at Cap Haitien, reigned the terrible Christophe who styled himself "Benefactor of the Nation, First Crowned Monarch of the New World," and established a nobility of unblemished African blood. To the west, in Jérémie, ruled black Goman, hunter of wild boars and light-skinned men, lord of a harem. The moderate mulattoes under Alexandre Pétion, their President, controlled the center with Port-au-Prince, the chief town.

Bolívar's boat landed at Les Cayes on the southwest coast. Bríón was there, but many of those who had sailed from Kingston for Cartagena had been caught in Morillo's trap. Robert Sutherland, the British commercial agent and a partisan of independence, gave Bolívar a letter for Pétion, and he proceeded to the capital.

The day he arrived, January 1, was a feast day; Bolívar wandered about the town, watching the busy market and cafés. The French had been more cruel masters than the Spanish and Portuguese; no principle of a theocracy, no conscience incarnate in great men like Las Casas, had tempered their exploitation; but the sterilizing separatism of the English was not in their culture; Haiti was not another Jamaica. The people were intense, subtle, flaring, although they lacked the understructure of abundant strength of the Negroes and pardos of Cuba or the mainland.

On January 2, 1816, Pétion received Bolívar. The President was a small mulatto (*pétion*, little one, had been his name as a slave), soft-spoken, shrewd. Bolívar, at ease with him, was moved by the sadness that seemed to express the long sorrow of his people; he felt the man firm within his gentleness. And Pétion liked Bolívar. This aristocrat was of the breed that had enslaved his race. But Pétion sensed a common ground, of earth and of spirit: the American ground of freedom for all peoples. While they conversed somewhat vaguely, Pétion was thinking. When Bolívar got up to leave, the President asked him to return next day; he had made up his mind.

No nation had recognized the independence of Haiti. Whether Napoleon or a Bourbon reigned in Paris, the French would try to come back. No government, not even the United States, would lift a hand to help a Negro republic. Morillo had already sent rude letters to Port-au-Prince, demanding that Haiti harbor no enemy of Spain and threatening reprisals. Well, if there was no state in all the world to acknowledge Haiti, let Haiti do what it could to create one! When Bolivar returned, the talk was pointed. Pétion granted haven to all the refugees in Les Cayes, and all possible aid while they formed their expedition. Supplies, funds, muskets, artillery, powder, even boats: he had already sent the orders. Bolivar owed him no thanks. It was a fair bargain, if Bolivar promised, as soon as his Republic was reborn, to free the slaves. Bolivar gave his word, and returned to Les Cayes.

The village became the meeting ground for patriots. Boat after boat sailed in from all Caribbean ports where they had fled; and they came half naked, half starved; many were lost on the way, hunted by Spanish ships and buccaneers, killed by privation. Meanwhile, as Morillo pushed irresistibly south from Cartagena toward Bogotá, Brión with the help of General Marion, the Haitian President's representative, prepared and fitted the little expedition. A few years later, when Brión died, a bankrupt, Bolivar acknowledged his debt and America's to this island magnate who in other circumstances might have become merely a millionaire.

One February morning, several hundred men crowded the patio of the house of Madame Jeanne Bouvil, in Savane on the outskirts of Les Cayes. They were Venezuelan and Granadan officers, many destined to be famous: Santiago Mariño, Piar, Bermúdez, the trio jealous of Bolivar; Salom, Soublette, Piñango, Ambrosio Plaza, Anzoátegui: all future generals; Pedro Gual, the Venezuelan diplomat, Francisco Antonio Zea, the cerebral Granadan lawyer with the head of an eagle; the French soldier Ducoudray-Holstein, who distinguished himself by writing a slanderous book against Bolivar; the French privateer Jean Aury, who called himself (titles were cheap as

blood) "Commodore of Cartagena," claimed to have served with Andrew Jackson in New Orleans, and planned to divert Bríón's supplies, after a feint at South America, to Mexico where he would sell them at a huge profit. More devoted soldiers of fortune were there, like the able Scot, Gregory MacGregor. Of course Bríón was on hand, and Bolivar's secretary, Pedro Briceño Méndez. Most of those present wanted Spain out of America, but here the accord ended. Federalists quarreled with centralists; partisans of invasion of Venezuela argued with those who favored an attack on New Granada. Some flying flags of egoism thought they should lead; some were moralists and (rightly) called some others pirates. When Bolivar rose to open the conclave, he saw before him within the walled patio and its fig trees the chaos and much of the power of America Hispana.

He drove straight at the moot points. He favored an attack on Venezuela from the east, as remote as possible from Morillo marching toward Bogotá. They could land in Oriente. But it would be useless, unless a strong central government was ready to take over; and it must have a supreme commander. Zea seconded Bolivar. Aury jumped to his feet: One supreme chief meant dictatorship, and he was under the impression they were all democrats. He proposed a Junta with Bolivar as one of the three. Bolivar replied by pointing out what divided authority had done to Venezuela and New Granada. Bríón got up: he was ready to give his fortune, a hundred thousand gold pesos, to the cause, but only if the command was Bolivar's. Bolivar spoke again: he would take orders from any chief named by the conclave; but one supreme chief there must be! Bríón called for a vote and the voices were for Bolivar. This did not satisfy Bríón. "General Santiago Mariño," he asked, "do you consent to accept General Bolivar as your chief?" "Yes, I accept," replied Mariño; Bríón went down the lines, asking each man. Aury, Bermúdez and a scattered few said No. Bolivar was elected.

Six weeks later, Bolivar wrote to his nephew, Leandro Palacios, a refugee on the British island of Saint Thomas: ". . . just four words to tell you that we leave here day after

tomorrow, bound straight for our homeland. We have fourteen ships of war, an army of two thousand, munitions for a ten years' campaign. Tell all your friends."

The letter was intended for the enemy. In fact, there were seven vessels: five goletas or sloops with one cannon apiece in the bow, and but two deserving to be called ships of war. On board there were two hundred and fifty men, not two thousand . . . all officers . . . the bones of an army. The weeks of preparation had been sharp with rancor. Bermúdez had tried to challenge Bolivar to a duel, and been expelled. Aury, unable to subvert, had tried to cripple. When Pétion refused to give him arms for Mexico, he had convinced Zea of his legal claim to one of the larger ships, and the lawyer, named treasurer of the expedition, assigned it to him. Bolivar in a rage tore up the document and drove Aury out of Haiti.

Of course, the tiny flotilla did not sail "straight" for Venezuela. They skirted the south shore of Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico, with brief landings for supplies and recruits. In one place they captured two Spanish priests, in another they swapped the two padres for two cows. When they reached the Lesser Antilles, they picked up refugees, some of them soldiers and sailors; among them twenty ladies from Caracas and Cumaná, who had kept alive in St. Thomas by playing the guitar in dance halls and selling embroidery to the ships bound for Europe. So grave was their plight that Bolivar could not deny them their preference for the risks of war, their tearful pleas to come along. Among them were Bolivar's flame of the great days in Caracas, Josefina Machado, and her mother.

Morillo had known from the beginning of the expedition forming at Les Cayes. Why did he not send his fleet stationed in Venezuela to bottle it up or to pounce on it when it sailed? Perhaps he was afraid, so far from his base, to challenge "a fleet of fourteen men-of-war" and an "army" rumored to include fierce Haitians. Perhaps the success of the past years made him confident and playful, like a cat toying with a mouse. As the patriots approached Margarita, they veered to the east, far off the usual course where Spain's main navy

waited. The strategy was Bríón's. They surprised a squadron of minor Spanish boats and destroyed them in a furious battle. Bríón was shot in the jaw. As he stood on the bridge, his dark head bandaged, Bolivar made him "Admiral of the Republic." They sailed into Juan Griego, northern port of the island, and the Margaritans received them with tears of joy.

The Margaritans were fishers of pearls; the soil of their land and their furrowed faces resembled the harsh rugose shells they opened by the thousands. Before their miserable huts they sat in families, from grandmother to naked babies, and knifed out the rare pearls; and always a lord came and took the pearls away, leaving them their poverty and the empty shells. Only the name of the lord changed. But here was a man who swore their island and its treasure were theirs! They followed him and his officers to a bleak place called Villa del Norte; they stood outside the church, a poor thing of lesioned plaster, and watched through the open doors and windows. The officers again acclaimed Bolivar as commander; named Santiago Mariño deputy commander, and their own fellow Margaritan, Arismendi, General-in-chief. Bolivar spoke to them:

"I have not come to give you laws." For that, a new Congress would be called as soon as possible . . . which meant, as soon as some fragment of Tierra Firme had been won. "But hear my voice," he pleaded. "Remain united. Free your slaves." He coined a phrase which, a generation later, Lincoln would modulate: "*Our land cannot be free and slave at the same time.*"

Even little Margarita was not wholly cleared. To the south the fort of Pamatar (where Piar had defied Bolivar and Mariño) held fourteen hundred Spanish regulars commanded by a Venezuelan, General Juan Bautista Pardo. Against them in their strong high place, Bolivar had five hundred men. He sent Pardo a message: The *guerra a muerte* was revoked; all blame was placed on "the European Spaniards;" he offered Pardo honorable terms. Pardo refused to be bluffed; Bolivar refused a disadvantageous battle. He turned the island over to Arismendi, and sailed for Tierra Firme. There he would

swiftly flesh his skeleton army and return, he promised, to drive the King's men from Pampatar. Winds and currents were adverse, it took six days of beating about the island south and east to get to Carúpano. Its tiny Spanish garrison was swiftly thrown out, but the patriots found a deserted village: the fisher folk had all fled to the mountains.

O C U M A R E

BOLIVAR was home again, at the spot from which he had escaped two years before, after the shameful episodes of Bianchi, Piar and Ribas, and after the writing of his paternal message to the Venezuelans. Ribas was dead, Castillo was dead: he read an omen in the ignominious end of these foes of his destiny. But if they had lived, he would have worked with them, as he was now working with Piar. Bolivar sent the high-strung man of color south toward Maturín to recruit the half-breeds of the plains. Santiago Mariño he sent on the same mission east to Güiria opposite British Trinidad. Both succeeded. But to Bolivar in Carúpano, a bare hundred men came back from the mountains! He waited a month in the bleak village. He proclaimed the slaves free. They took their freedom and went west to join the army of the King; or they escaped on British vessels whose thrifty captains sold them back into slavery throughout the islands. All this Bolivar reported to Arismendi to explain his delayed return to Margarita. He gazed at the hot hills roweled by rains, ossified by sun; his beloved country. Even food was scarce, with the fishermen fled. From this new nadir, he leaped again to a high decision. If he stayed for the recruits who did not come he would lose the men he had. Mariño and Piar were rapidly forming their own forces, which would require leverage by him. The fulcrum was Caracas. With his six hundred men and the artillery Pétion had provided, he resolved to gain the central coast near his own valleys, where food and willing men were plentiful; and to assault Caracas!

The plan had its logic. The armies of Spain, although based on the capital, were fanning out to meet him. Vastly superior in men and arms, they would be prepared where they expected to find him: at the peripheries . . . from Coro to Cumaná, not at the center where they must figure Bolivar would surely not be so mad as to attack. This was the place to attack.

He landed at Ocumare, beneath Aragua, his own happy valley, with its swift road to Caracas. With him was Colonel Carlos Soubllette, brainy and steadfast. Soubllette had pointed out the odds against them, and Bolivar replied: "Only audacity can save us: today temerity is prudence."

At once, a hundred good men came in, raising the half-regiment to seven hundred. Bolivar sent Soubllette with five hundred and seventy up into the valley, while he remained behind with the supplies and the guns. Soubllette's order was to keep moving: to gather recruits, to feel out the enemy's strength, never under any threat to pitch camp; then with his fresh forces to circle back. Soubllette was a brave, deliberate officer but he was not a Girardot, a Ribas, an Urdaneta. He learned of seven thousand royalists racing toward him from Valencia; he took a strong position above the valley; he stopped *moving*; and Bolivar was stranded on the shore of Ocumare.

Why did Bolivar not lead the raid, with Soubllette to guard the supplies? The cloud of conjectures has never lifted. At Ocumare were the ladies, including Josefina; and Soubllette in his memoirs hints that this was the reason. If it is true, it is the one instance where Bolivar placed a woman above his country. More probably he misjudged Soubllette's *élan* and the response of the people, whom he had expected instantly to rise. Had he been right, Ocumare was the best center for integrating the advance on Caracas. Bolivar's error was in timing. Now came bad news from the east; Bermúdez, who had picked a quarrel with Bolivar in Les Cayes and been banned from Venezuela until the end of the war, had joined Mariño in Güiría. It might be necessary to return to the East to control such dangerous lieutenants. Bolivar reloaded the boats with the heavy guns, for which Soubllette had failed to send down

mules; the skippers were told to stand by for a swift evacuation. With his small troop, Bolivar probed the valley to make contact with Soublette. A royalist vanguard threw him back to the shore; and half the ships had sailed away; the sailors, typical "brethren of the coast," had decided to sell their cargo of artillery at the nearest Dutch island. Soublette was moving again, although Bolivar did not know, and the royalist seven thousand, fearing an ambush by a mythical army, had gone back to Valencia. Soublette sent the good news to Bolivar; but the envoy, a traitor, falsified the message: he told Bolivar that the Spaniards — not Soublette — were coming. Panic seized the remaining boats, and they made off, with the men, the supplies, and the ladies. Bolivar could not stop them. He stood alone on the strand of Ocumare.

He knew what his fate would be if the Spaniards took him alive. Perhaps he thought of his uncle's head, mounted on a pike in the Cathedral plaza of Caracas. He took out his pistol and cocked it. The swift night of the tropics was falling. He looked toward the wooded heights above the shore, whence the enemy would come. As soon as he saw them, he would use his pistol on himself. He waited. From behind, on the darkened water, he heard the sound of oars. Through the gloom and the rain, he watched a rowboat grate the shallow beach, and a man step out. He recognized Bideau, a petty officer of one of his boats. Quietly the man beckoned to Bolivar.

He had persuaded his shipmates to be loyal. They pursued the others to Bonaire, the small Dutch island east of Curaçao, where Bolivar found a barque to return the ladies to St. Thomas. With his recaptured guns and supplies, he hurried to Güiría.

Mariño received him coldly. He had said Yes to Brión's solemn question in Les Cayes; but did not this latest fiasco absolve him? Bermúdez was there, openly hostile. Piar, gathering strength in the plains toward the great River, was ominously silent. The soldiers and sailors of the town caught the mood; and when Bolivar appeared in the streets there were

muffled cries of "Abajo Bolivar! Vivan Mariño y Bermúdez!" Bolivar was alone. He decided to sail; and as he strode toward the wharf, the men gathered and moved in to stop him. Bolivar drew his sword, and walked toward his boat. Bermúdez ran toward him, but two officers held and disarmed him. With sword unsheathed, Bolivar stepped silently aboard, and sailed again from Venezuela.

S Y M B O L S

LA GUAIRA, Carúpano, Cartagena, Ocumare, now Güiria: five times in four years, America expelled Bolivar. The guns and equipment collected at such pains by Brión and Pétion remained with Mariño and Bermúdez; Bolivar, empty-handed, turned back to Haiti. Outside the port of Jacmel, a hurricane overwhelmed his skiff and drove him three days out to sea against the very edge of death. He survived, and wrote a report of what had happened to Pétion, Brión, and to Hyslop in Jamaica. His account of disaster was bare, and yet its spirit was sanguine.

Pétion answered at once:

LIBERTY, FREEDOM. REPUBLIC OF HAITI.

Port-au-Prince, 7 December 1816

13 of Independence.

Alexandre Pétion, President of Haiti
to His Excellency, General Bolivar.

General:

I received the letter you honored me by writing the 4th of this month, and with more sorrow than I can say I read the deplorable events which compelled you to abandon Tierra Firme. So it is, in great and in small things: a mysterious fatality warps the wisest scheme; unforeseen reverses mock every precaution and destroy the best laid plans.

Your Excellency has just experienced this cruel truth; but if fortune has laughed at you twice, on the third occasion it may smile.

I at least have this presentiment; and if I can do anything to mitigate your pain and sorrow, you may count on all that is within my power.

Therefore, hasten to this city. We will confer.

PÉTION

Bolivar's confidence was justified. His purpose in sending Mariño to Güiria and eastward was to make Margarita untenable by the Spaniards and to win command of the mouths of the Orinoco, gateway from the world to Guayana and the plains. His purpose in sending Piar south to the plains was to begin to lift them from the havoc done by Boves and his fellows. Both objectives succeeded. Mariño won Cumaná, cleared the coast westward almost to Barcelona; the Spaniards were compelled to quit Margarita, leaving it to Arismendi who promptly contributed a force of hardy islanders to Mariño. Far to the west where the Apure flows into the Orinoco, a new name was spoken: José Antonio Páez, as fierce a captain as Boves, who was converting the llaneros from royalist marauders into decent, republican soldiers. Even the rash thrust of Soublette from Ocumare into the valley of Aragua was justified. With his small force, Soublette had cut across the mountains to the plains (the route of Rodríguez and his pupil when they camped out from San Mateo) and made a juncture with the allies of Páez. And in eastern New Granada, Urdaneta had evaded Morillo, joined Santander, retaken Barinas, and with Páez defeated the royalists at the battle of Yagual, clearing the plains almost to San Fernando of Apure. Páez, Bolivar learned, was calling himself "Supreme Chief of Apure"; Arismendi jealously ruled Margarita; Santiago Mariño considered all Oriente his domain; Piar was conducting himself like a potentate in the lower Orinoco. But the American reconquest of Venezuela had certainly begun; Bolivar's plans were paying. Only *he* seemed to have no place in them.

At this moment, all the leaders, with the possible exception of Urdaneta and Soublette, would have agreed that Simon Bolivar was out of the picture. He had done very well in his first campaign, speeding from the Magdalena to Caracas —

although his captains won the battles. Since, he had won no single important engagement. His work had created a medium in which caudillos, each with his own following, could function better than he: a medium hostile to its creator! Mariño, Piar, Urdaneta, Páez, Santander, Monagas, Zaraza, the Scot MacGregor, had won the battles! Most of them were ambitious. Almost all differed from Bolivar, in their espousal of federalism: they wanted "little countries" loosely allied; Bolivar wanted an America they could not see, bound by a central rule which they abhorred.

As adversity flung him back into Haiti, Bolivar knew that he, he alone, saw the whole scene. Piar, Arismendi, Páez, Mariño and the others were good fighters; but the vision to integrate what they won into Venezuela and New Granada . . . these into *America*, was his; and this vision had begun the subtle transformation of the peoples into Americans ready to join *American* armies. Bolivar knew he was needed. His captains were men of his own age or a few years younger; but his sense of them was paternal. His vision made him their father — and America's. They lived and fought within *his* clarity, although they did not know it.

That clarity was not yet whole in Bolivar; not yet strong enough to fuse his will into acceptance of the imperatives for action. His failures, despite what Pétion generously wrote, were no "bad fortune"; they were the outward signs of inward incompleteness. True fatherhood is not born, it must be achieved. The bar to Bolivar's clairvoyance was Caracas, was his love of Caracas. As a good soldier, of course, Bolivar knew that his objective must be no spot of earth, but to destroy the enemy. His mistake was a fallacy of emotion: the belief that because Caracas was the heart of his own life it was the heart of Venezuela; wherefore to have it would be to have the country. He had won Caracas — and been thrown out of the country. Ocumare proved he had not learned the lesson of that. Genius, which is the power to associate from the known to the unknown, to bridge from the created to the uncreated, distils individual events to essence. Therefore, in men of

genius, experience is symbol. But when genius finds a symbol where it is not, or mistakes its meaning, the error is tragic: great power cannot go wrong lightly. To Bolivar, at this state, Caracas was more than his home, more than a military focus for men and supplies: it was the American site of his ideas and values. Liberty, the Nation, were words he had heard first in Caracas. To win Caracas meant to win what they meant. But the true symbolic heart of Venezuela was not the "cultured" capital, it was the Orinoco. And, unlike Miranda, Bolivar had this heart within him. He did not yet know it, nor its implications.

Symbols, good or bad, populate Bolivar's life. He failed in Ocumare because, aiming at Caracas, he was not aiming at the symbolic heart of his potential power. With him in Ocumare was Pepita Machado; a woman of sophisticated culture, who symbolized Caracas. Undoubtedly, Vicente Lecuna, the historian, is correct in denying that Pepita influenced Bolivar's decisions in that unhappy ingress; but Soubllette was symbolically right, inasmuch as the woman stood for Bolivar's infatuation with Caracas. He sent her back to St. Thomas, the British island, and here again is a symbol. Later, when he learned that his former mistress might return to Caracas which was still in royalist hands, he was deeply hurt: another symbol.

Pétion was a symbol. Romantic historians find that he helped Bolivar, as the noble member of an oppressed race succoring an oppressed brother people. Positivist historians see the shrewd man of state who, having no friend among the nations, helped to create a nation in order to create a friend. Neither school is wrong; both are incomplete. Pétion, the dark-skinned man, symbolizes the chaos of America, the dark source of power, the unrevealed promise! — presences in Bolivar. Brión was a symbol; the trader schooled in Europe and the United States, the man of lineage remote as possible from the earthy African and Indian who served to free a new world, corresponded to elements in Bolivar. If, as seems likely, a paternal ancestor of Brión was a Sephardic Jew emigrated from Provence to Holland at the time when Southern France was a

climax of Mediterranean culture, the presence of Brión in Bolívar's life becomes even more symbolic. For Bolívar's vision of a new America, stemming from Spain's vision of a world in Christ, had Semitic origins. In idea, Bolívar laid contribution on all continents, all races.

Four months Bolívar remained in Port-au-Prince, conferring with Pétiou and Brión. Then a new expedition sailed again for Margarita, now entirely in Arismendi's hands. And again at the homely church of Villa del Norte, Bolívar rescinded the "war without quarter," declared the slaves free, and called for a Constituent Assembly to which he would resign his temporary post as head of the Republic. Arismendi had taken Barcelona. Bolívar sent Pedro Gual on another mission; this time to the United States. He was to tell them the ports of Barcelona, Cumaná and Margarita welcomed American ships. Let them sail in with arms, textiles, manufactured goods, in return for the wealth of Venezuela. And let them bring pioneers! the land was empty.

Not empty of discord. Santiago Mariño wanted the whole East for himself; Arismendi demurred, and Piar sided with Arismendi. Bolívar wrote to Mariño, praising him for his victories, but reminding him of the fate of Ribas and Castillo. Then he sailed for Barcelona. His eyes were still on Caracas.

In the first days of 1817, Bolívar led a small trained force along the coast westward toward the capital, the route in reverse of the twenty thousand fleeing two and a half years before from Boves. At Clarines, the royalists hurled Bolívar back. Historians, among them Lecuna, insist that Bolívar did not intend to take Caracas. The thrust was, they say, "a feint" to hold the Spaniards while he desperately tried to bind his chiefs together: Piar, Mariño, Bermúdez in the East; Páez in the far West; Monagas and a half-dozen others — all infected by the land's anarchy, each tangential off on his own way. The defense is plausible. But does it explain his writing to his nephew that they would presently meet in Caracas? his proclamation, smuggled in to the citizens of Caracas, that he would

soon be with them? Did he not know that a feint, which his compatriots construed as a defeat, would undermine their confidence still more? Bolivar still believed in his campaign of 1813; he was still blinded by Caracas.

Clearer proof of all that he intended to take the capital was the psychological effect of the defeat on Bolivar. Had he been merely "feinting," he would not have suffered a shock as deep as that of the collapse of Miranda's republic five years before.

The defeat of Clarines cast Bolivar down to earth. He rose in a conversion. This is proved (like the conversion of his first voyage from La Guaira to Curaçao) by his immediate conduct. His premise then had been that the American nation potentially existed: the problem was to awaken and establish it. Hence his ringing proclamations; his "war to the death" on Spaniards; his freeing of the slaves; his attempt to unify the leaders; his obsession with Caracas, capital of the potentially living nation. Now at last he saw! The problem was not to awaken, to order, to establish: it was *to create*.

To create from the beginning . . . from chaos. And this meant, first of all, to accept the chaos and to enter it. Chaos, the mother; he, the lover, the potential father.

Bolivar turned his back on Caracas and the coast. He turned toward the Orinoco, the Jungle . . . the wild heart. And there was the treacherous Piar. "I am coming to you," he wrote him.

Meanwhile, behind his back as he went south into the Forest, the situation swiftly worsened again. The Spaniards retook Barcelona, captured and shot the patriot general and three hundred of his soldiers. They pushed on to Cumaná, driving Mariño eastward. (He had refused to obey Bolivar's order to come west and defend Barcelona.) Bolivar did nothing; these defeats seemed to trouble him not at all. Brión, fearing the new loss of Margarita and of the few remaining Atlantic ports, sought advice on where to mass his little navy in order to defend them. Bolivar said: "No! Forget Margarita. Prepare to sail up the Orinoco." Brión did not understand

this reversal; even Brión began to doubt Bolivar.

Then, Santiago Mariño on his own authority called "the Constituent Congress" promised by Bolivar in Villa del Norte. The Congress met in the little village of San Felipe de Carioca, inland from Carúpano, and only eleven leaders attended; but among them were Zea, Bolivar's trusted man of finance, and Brión! Mariño presented the "resignation" of Bolivar and of himself as first and second in command. Mariño was chosen Supreme Chief; Brión remained Admiral; a federalist state was proclaimed. Having disavowed Bolivar and all his creed, the Congress adjourned. Bolivar by now was on the Orinoco. He did nothing; he was not disturbed. He merely stopped sending orders to Mariño. When his secretary, Briceño Méndez, desperately tried to whitewash the "Congresillo," as an attempt "to strengthen Bolivar's arm with a Senate," Bolivar sent back a humorous letter asking the young man what he was afraid of. "Work hard," he wrote, "and fear only what *I* fear in my dear Briceño."

MANUEL PIAR

THE MAN most troubled by Bolivar's sudden appearance on the River was Piar.

Legend has been profuse about Manuel Carlos Piar, whose life of glamour and sorrow needs no embroidering. He was called the son of a French noblewoman, a refugee from revolutionary Paris (Piar was born in 1777, before the French Revolution). He was called the son of an aristocratic creole lady by the Portuguese Prince of Bragança (at Piar's birth, the older prince was dead, the younger prince was six). Legend even shifted his birth, to bracket it with Bolivar's. In fact, Manuel Piar was born in Curaçao, the bastard of a mulatto, Isabela Gómez (in later years a midwife) and of a rich sea captain from the Canaries. His father gave him his name and a sailor's education. His revolutionary spirit he imbibed from his mother who, to judge by her several affairs, amatory and

conspiratorial, was both beautiful and brave. She was accused of harboring Gual and España, leaders of the 1791 rebellion; and was deported from Venezuela to her native island. Manuel (she had three sons by the same man) was involved in that rebellion and also deported. In 1804, he distinguished himself when the British under Bligh besieged the island. He learned navigation, took to commerce, went to Haiti, where revolution won him forever from the business of making money. He commanded a Haitian ship of war; but when Venezuela rose, he joined Mariño.

On the dubious assumption that aristocrats look like aristocrats, Piar's appearance verified the legends of his birth. His hair was fine; his lips and nose were exquisitely chiseled, he had large heavy eyes. The Negro blood darkened his skin no more than many a creole's — or Brión's; was visible only in the relation of eye to nose and mouth; but in his spirit it was potent. Piar created his own army on the Orinoco; they came to him from the llanos, from the iron and gold mines south of the River toward Upata and Tortola: men largely of color or mixed Indian blood, like the armies of Boves: swift fighters and cruel, but lovers now of the flag of Venezuela. At San Félix on the great River halfway between the sea and Angostura, Piar led them against the Spaniards in a battle which Bolivar called the most brilliant victory of the American wars. The *guerra a muerte* had been revoked, but Piar let his Indians wreak their centuries' pent hate on every Spaniard. Hundreds were murdered in cold blood, including a group of Catalan Capuchins, saints in their jungle mission on the Caroni River. For this butchery, Bolivar rebuked Piar, but named him nevertheless General of all the forces of Guayana, the province (largely jungle unexplored) of the great River. Bolivar seemed to make no connection between the Piar on whom he now relied, and the insubordinate Piar who had refused to let his commander set foot on Margarita. Piar's army belonged to the Republic; Bolivar commanded the Republic: this was the premise of their meeting, so perfectly assumed that Piar accepted. Bolivar gave the fiery and neurotic pardo no oppor-

tunity to quarrel. But he noted that Piar was never at ease in his presence, and did what he could to avoid it.

The "Congresillo" of Carioca evaporated into nothing. Bríón came back, Zea came back, and Bolivar received them without a word. (It would take Mariño a little longer to associate Bolivar's total absence from the coast with trouble.) The Orinoco narrowed between black basalt rocks at Angostura, the river capital. Before Bolivar came south, Piar had tried to storm it by land, and been beaten back. He knew the capture of royalist Angostura required a navy; the navy was Bríón's and Bríón was Bolivar's man. Piar accepted Bolivar.

The capture of Angostura became Bolivar's primary objective. It meant losing touch with all that was conscious and advanced in Venezuela: its seaboard cities with eyes upon North America, Europe and the capitals of America Hispana. It meant immersion in the dark land, exile into the unconscious of his country. It meant union with the unconscious depth of himself. In his career, after seven years of almost invariably adverse war, Bolivar had reached bottom, and was starting from the bottom. All this, of course, he did not reason out, as it is stated here. He had been driven by calamity; this plunge into the instinctual viscera of his land was the one course left. Symbols must be functional, they are enacted because they *work*. Bolivar chose the Orinoco, the dark Guayanian heart, because to do so was pragmatic. He chose Piar, because Piar was *there* — as inevitably. Piar's hysterical confusion of bloods and egoisms . . . for country, for self; his treacherous feline swiftness, were parts of *the situation*, integral with the alternate flood and drought of the savannahs, with the trees hooded in grey moss, with the venomous life beneath them.

There could be no sharp-drawn line of battle here. Patriots and royalists were scattered throughout Guayana, in scores of hamlets, mining camps, missions. Most of the Indians had been won, at least passively, by Piar — except always the Caribs at the Delta of the Orinoco, who speared all men not of their tribe, as they speared the crocodile. Two hundred miles up

the river, Angostura, the one real town of this kingdom of chaos, would be a hard place to seize. The five thousand dwellers in its 'dobe houses climbing up the hill to the church plaza were passionately royalist. In the rains, it was surrounded by the angry Orinoco, and to the east by a lagoon with a parapet a mile long and by a flooded ditch. In the dry season, its lowest streets were eighty feet above the river. Only in the rains could it be won, and only by an amphibious operation. Boats were needed. Up and down the river, wherever the patriots had a foothold, shipyards sprang up, manned by soldiers, and the great canoes and skiffs, as soon as they were finished, were floated down the Delta to be assembled by Brión.

The advance of Morillo, back victorious from Bogotá, would, Bolivar reckoned, force Mariño eastward closer to the Orinoco. That was what he wanted, and it happened. Carúpano, even Carioca, scene of the Congresillo which repudiated Bolivar, ignominiously fell, and several of Mariño's best partisans were shot by the Spaniards. Remote in his jungle task, moving from shack to shack, fighting the malaria, the small pockets of resistance, Bolivar felt, among the leaders, a new convergence toward him. He stood above the intrigues which divided them; their mutual antagonisms drove them to him. With Piar, Arismendi (who hated Mariño) acknowledged Bolivar as chief. Far to the west, Urdaneta, who had never strayed, convinced Páez; the maverick (whom Bolivar had never met) branded himself (if not indelibly) a servant of the Republic over which Bolivar presided. Páez was six hundred miles up the river, but Bolivar at once sent envoys; under cover of night they stole past the Spanish guns of Angostura and brought Páez news of Bolivar's preparations. Also an order: Páez should feel out the enemy from the west, spread the fear of an attack from that direction. . . . Hundreds of miles north, in the Caribbean market, Zea was again at work, trading mules, horses, anything that could be shipped from Guayana, in return for odd lots of guns and ammunition. Bermúdez had been exiled, he had drawn his sword against Bolivar; but he was needed, for he

was second to Mariño in the strength of his following among the men of Oriente. As if nothing had happened between them, on the strength of his ability which was great, Bermúdez was chosen by Bolivar to lead the land troops while Brión's boats cleared the shores between the sea and Angostura. To Mariño, Bolivar wrote friendly letters again, revealing his plans and urging Mariño to be ready to protect Brión's rear when the navy sailed. He was the father; boldly he assumed that in this common threat his family must drop their quarrels.

A few months before, while Bolivar was still aiming at Caracas, his letters had been fevered with false confidence. Now, in the jungles and swamps of the dark River, he was calm.

C A S A C O I M A

ANGOSTURA was a metropolis compared to Guayana la Antigua, the Spaniards' second fortified place on the river, just above the myriad lacings of the Delta. This was a group of small wood bastions and a wood stockade; it faced across the main stream two sudden mountains, a reef and, beyond the reef, a large lagoon called Casacoima. Individual craft built farther up the river might glide past the guns in the black nights to reach Brión beyond the river on the coast; but of course, before the assembled expedition could sail in and approach Angostura, Guayana la Antigua must be taken.

In an abandoned sugar mill on the far side of the lagoon, Bolivar had his headquarters. Piar was usually away, in the missions or elsewhere, on business of the army. The time for the advance was near. A final group of canoes large enough for cannon were scheduled, one night of rain, to steal past the forts; and each pilot carried messages for Brión. The operation began well; but the last four craft were heard and drew fire, while Spanish boats went out in the black firmament to find them. In case they were intercepted, they had orders (which they successfully obeyed) to slip by a channel through

the reef into the lagoon, where Bolivar had stationed a small company to defend them. Here, they all crouched until dawn broke the drench of land and sky from black to grey; and now, the fight would begin. Bolivar and his men left their horses at the one accessible approach from the lagoon shore to the mill; and they crept silently through the swamp toward the place where they supposed the Spaniards to be waiting. A sound made Bolivar's group look back; a large body of Spanish soldiers, between them and their horses, was coming toward them. The men were far enough ahead to race for cover, but Bolivar was trapped. His one possible escape was the lagoon. He plunged in, knowing the waters to be lethal with crocodiles and venomous snakes. Shots scudded close. He made for the deep part of the lagoon, swam as much as he could under water to avoid the bullets, and was safe on the far bank near the mill, a mile away.

The four canoes were captured, but several of the men got clear and made their circuitous way through the jungle, around the lagoon, to the mill. That night, over the primitive supper table, they told their story. The Spaniards had gone after them, with only a few shots for the man who dived in the lagoon: surely not knowing who he was. Perhaps, said Bolivar; but the crocodiles knew and therefore let him go: a skinny fellow with no good flesh on his bones worth ripping off. They laughed around the table, while the mosquitoes and zancudos made their hot, adhesive music and the great moths flung their ecstasy into the flame of the candle. The rain was a blanket of heat on the roof, and the trees' breathing blackness was rent by the bright screams of nocturnal birds. Two miles away were the Spaniards in their fort, and the vast lands to the seas and the mountains were Spain's. But Bolivar in his clean white shirt spoke to his companions as if the bare escape inspired him. Soon, he told them, they would have Angostura. Then, New Granada. They would march to Peru; stand on the silver mountain of Potosí and salute from its snows the freedom of Buenos Aires. The soldiers stared uncomfortably at their chief. In swimming the lagoon, had he caught a fever? or was he mad? . . .

BOOK TWO: *The Peoples*

“El labrador siembra en un tiempo y coge en otro.”

“The laborer sows in one season, and reaps in another.”

MIGUEL DE MOLINOS

V I

Creating A Republic

"Deeds to be done well must be done twice.
The first time instructs the second."

THE RIVER CAPITAL

BRIÓN'S FLOTILLA and the shore troops led by Bermúdez swept, a slow broom, up the Orinoco. On July 17, 1817, the liberators, with manifestoes and tons of fresh meat, took Angostura. But the food and the fiction of deliverance did not hold the half-starved royalists who chose to flee, three thousand, through the flooded plains toward Caracas. Bolivar did not come to the new capital of his unborn nation until September; he was busy in the East, fighting the old disease, the anarchy of the leaders.

Mariño, who had lost the main towns of Oriente, ignored orders; Piar, encouraged by Mariño, was spreading wild words through the plains on the rights of the dark races and of Bolivar as a new tyrant. Bolivar wrote a final warning letter, but Piar felt its affectionate tone as condescension, its firmness as challenge. Bolivar, he complained, had never loved him; his praise of him as a soldier masked his personal indifference. Piar resigned his command; applied for a passport to leave the country, which Bolivar granted: Piar, he wrote, was free to stay or go where he liked. Piar went to Angostura, and talked revolution against Bolivar. Yet hopeful, Bolivar ordered Piar to come to him (he was still at the Delta). With a small troop, Piar escaped in the night, heading for the coast and Mariño.

Bolívar sent Cedeño, also a man of mixed blood, with a company to arrest him.

When they overtook Piar, he ordered his hundred men to fight. Probably, until now, they had not understood their situation. They refused, laid down their arms, and Piar was alone. He was brought back to Angostura.

Bolívar never revealed the faintest personal prejudice against men of color; yet beyond the abolition of slavery he had not challenged the economic order which maintained the whites, owners of the land, above the pardos and mestizos. But Piar's letters and his testimony at the trial do not hint of social revolution. Discord had been the atmosphere of the seven years' fighting. Mariño, Bermúdez, many another leader, had been insubordinate — and forgiven. Piar's distinction was that he loved Bolívar and wanted an emotional response which Bolívar could not make. Piar was the son, the jealous son longing to be acknowledged. Like Judas, the insecure disciple who must test his master's greatness with betrayal, Piar needed to "prove" his father's forgiveness. He did not "mean to be bad," as the child might put it; Bolívar would scold, perhaps humanely punish him, and tell him to be "good."

The court-martial selected by Bolívar nourished Piar's neurotic confidence. Brión, who presided, was also a native of Curaçao; the associate judges were officers who had fought under Piar in his great campaign and who owed their promotion to him; and the attorney for the defense was one of the ablest lawyers of Caracas. Bolívar wrote to Bermúdez: "My very strong wish is that the Court may find it can reconcile the dignity of law and government with the merits of the defendant." By now he had reached Angostura, but he did not see Piar and did not appear at the trial. Piar was not worried. His defense would be that he had spoken loosely — and done nothing. He grew effusively repentant. In a long letter to Mariño, he wrote: "When I was taken prisoner, I believed I had fallen into the hands of enemies; but how the heart of man deceives! I have been treated with the dignity I deserve, and many friends have overwhelmed me with confidence, consola-

tion, hope. . . . Do not mistake, dear friend," he urged, "there must be a single commander, and who could it be but Bolivar?"

The trial, whose full proceedings were recorded but not published until later, found Piar guilty. " . . . Manuel Piar has conspired against society and against the Government; he has disobeyed it; he has deserted; he has borne arms against other subordinates of the High Command. Wherefore the Republic concludes that he be condemned to be hanged. . . ." Even now, Piar was at ease. Pardon would come, as it should, from Bolivar . . . the strong, good father!

Bolivar admitted many times in years to come that personal justice had demanded either the same fate for Mariño or equal clemency for Piar. But Mariño was too important; the sacrifice of Piar might suffice to affirm the State and shock its enemies. Bolivar gave up Piar coldly, as a man is sacrificed in chess to improve the player's position. Piar's love for him, Piar's neurotic nature, Piar's problem as a man of mixed bloods, meant nothing to Bolivar; all that counted was to create the Republic. Bolivar signed the sentence of death, but canceled the recommendation of half the court that the condemned general be stripped of his rank, and substituted the firing squad for the gallows. Piar was to die, the 'next day, at sunset.

The order was brought to him in his cell; he put on his glasses and read it. All at once, the man's emotional structure shattered. He flung down his glasses, which broke on the floor; he tore his shirt and his hair. As suddenly, he grew calm. "He is sacrificing me!" Piar understood at last, and accepted. His peace endured. The next day, as the sun fell from the trees and the cathedral and the municipal palace of the plaza, he knelt before the horizontal guns. He refused to have his eyes bound, and faced death calmly.

Bolivar lived in a house on a wide, slow-rising rock above the town. The rooms, high-ceilinged, shadowed, held the cool of the night all day; and on the broad porch, with a view and the breeze of the great River, Bolivar slung his hammock, and worked. He dictated his enormous correspondence to several

secretaries, and no detail was too small for his attention. Only two provinces, Guayana and stony Margarita, were in patriot hands. Nine-tenths of all Venezuelans lived under the King; and every city of importance from Cumaná in the east to the western Andes. Of New Granada, alone the empty plain of Casanare beyond wild Apure was free. The Republic was largely in Bolivar's head; its assets were predominantly water. But Bolivar rationalized what produce there was: cattle, mules, horses, cotton, tobacco, rice and dyes; collected it in the Missions (the only economic centers in republican hands), and Zea and Brión shipped it to the Antilles for arms, while López Méndez, the Republic's agent in London, recruited supplies and men against unlimited promises. Royalist ranches on the plains were seized, with exceptions for widows and for those (even Spaniards) who would swear loyalty to the Republic. Meantime, a Council of State acted in lieu of a Congress (there was not land enough from which to call one).

Angostura was a half-empty garrison town; but Bolivar wanted a populous capital. He wrote to the refugees still in the islands, tempting them with deliberately gilded pictures of life on the Orinoco. "It is a scandal," he said to his nephew, "a disgrace to our country, that there should still be so many who look with indolence on the sacrifices of their brothers for the fatherland, and remain inert, simple spectators." He wrote courteous epistles to the padres in the Missions, urging them to raise more mules; daily instructions to his officers on the plains; politics and theory to the intellectuals who were invited to turn Angostura into a modern Athens. He devised means with Zea to prevent the foreign purchasers of produce from canceling their accounts against past debts. He examined the market prices of livestock and of guns. He made plans for the arrival of the foreign soldiers: "Never more than three hundred together," he ruled. "They must be absorbed in American divisions."

Every problem . . . home production, foreign credit, army desertions, recruiting, morale, propaganda, winning the church, fighting the virulent royalist propaganda led by José

Domingo Díaz in Caracas . . . was in essence one: the creating of a nation; and this depended, Bolivar knew, upon a *dynamic* act which lay beyond the solution of any specific problem, or of them all together. The Republic would not *be*, until it *acted*. Nor could it wait. The Thirteen Colonies of England, even before they rebelled, were the live embryo of a nation. But until Venezuela moved as Venezuela, all its specific preparatory efforts remained isolate, inorganic, summing to chaos. How, before it was ready to move, could Venezuela move? how live, before it was ready to live? *The answer was war*. Even before the country was ready for defense, it must wage war! And since Morillo in Caracas seemed to realize this truth, and shrewdly left Angostura alone to die of inanition, Venezuela's war must be aggressive.

Therefore, toward the close of the year, when Bolivar had been but a few months in Angostura (the dry season had freed the llanos from flood and the great grazing grasses were still green), he sent Zaraza, a dynamic cavalry officer, toward Calabozo, the former capital of Boves. An inferior royalist force, in part Spanish veterans of the Napoleonic campaign, hurled Zaraza's horsemen back. Bolivar re-formed an army and sent it north again. At La Hogaza, the royalists cut the republicans to pieces, capturing the guns and ammunitions so sorely earned and shipped to the Orinoco. Bolivar was not troubled. Until he was ready to win, defeat was less lethal than inaction: the embryo blood must flow! But it was time to do better. He looked toward the far western plain . . . toward Páez. But before Páez could help to integrate the nation, Páez himself must be "integrated."

Even San Fernando, the principal town of Apure, Páez's country, was still in Spanish hands. It lay on the Apure River, four hundred miles west of Angostura; and beyond it south-west another fifty miles in the village of Achaguas, Páez headed his quasi-nomadic power. His men for miles around lived their fluid life of the plains, but they acknowledged Páez as their chief, and his call by the telegraphy of speeding horses could bring them swiftly together. West of Apure was Casanare, the

vast savannah of New Granada, to which Santander had fled from Morillo. Santander had taught republicanism to the roughriding men. But they preferred Páez, one of their very own. Santander revealed much of himself in the way he met this humiliation. He told Páez that he refused to be deposed, but would agree to resign if the men first formally acknowledged him as their chief. Páez persuaded the llaneros; the acknowledgment and then the resignation were ceremoniously performed. Santander went back to Casanare.

Now Páez faced a less palatable problem. A letter came from Bolivar, expounding the urgent need of central command for the war against Spain: Páez must call his men together, explain the republic to which they unconsciously belonged, and make them swear allegiance to the head of the State. A difficult assignment! Who the devil was this Bolivar? a man of the city! a *mantuano*, as bad as a Spaniard! If Bolivar came to Apure, they would show him who led the llaneros! Páez, who had not yet learned to read or write, rose to the challenge. Carefully, in words they could grasp, he described to his tough men the necessity of Bolivar: a man who could write messages, who knew the cities and the ports, who could bring them clothes (they were half naked) and guns (they fought with wooden lances). Páez was their little father, but they must all accept the big chief. Páez stood in the shade of ceiba trees in arid squares of villages, and made his thousands swear fealty to the remote Commander of the Republic.

P Á E Z

HIS MEN called Páez "el catire," the white man, although his skin was leathery as theirs. Long ago, when the Spanish mayor of Acarigua, a town in the Andean foothills near Barinas, had rebuked the father of Páez for carrying a pistol in his saddle-bows (a privilege denied to the colored under Spain), the proud man had proved his "pure lineage on all four sides." José Antonio, the seventh son, was born on a farm in this

tobacco country, where the father held a humble post in the royal monopoly stores. The marriage sundered; the mother with her brood drifted into poverty and south to the plains. When Páez was fifteen, his quick head and hand were his mother's mainstay. When the fighting began, in 1811 (Páez was twenty-one), he was drafted by the Spaniards, but he deserted at once and joined the patriots. Páez knew the rivers and the plains, the beasts and the llaneros, who loved him. No one like him could lead a raid of hundreds swimming a river with their steeds and in a cloud of dust overwhelming the enemy. Battle was close to his nature; while it lasted he was cool and swift; when it was won, the man with a round head clamped close to taurine shoulders frequently fell from his horse in an epileptic fit. Then his men tenderly gathered him up, washed the foam from his lips, placed a bit of wood between his grinding teeth, and laid him in his hammock. Páez was all that his men were, and more; they loved him as a father because he was strong, they loved him as a son because of his strange weakness. Contrast was engrained in him — as in his country. In the midst of war, he learned to write. Later, in the fever of politics, he learned to play the violoncello, and brought a first symphony orchestra to Caracas. Bolívar could not have guessed the complexities of the man he was now ready to meet. On the last day of 1817, he began the four-hundred-mile journey.

"Nothing," he wrote to Páez before he left Angostura, "is more important than to hide my coming from the enemy."

The plains of Venezuela form a vast amphitheater sloping down from the coastal range at the north toward the Orinoco and the Apure. At the sides, east and west, they are green with the waters of the mountains; but the center, when the rains cease, is arid, a domain of snakes, iguanas, ostriches, tapirs, dantas and wild boar. The first four days, Bolívar and his army traversed this center, breasting the Orinoco in their sampans. As they came close to the green, more settled areas, they left the river and the boats with the supplies creeping up under cover of night. They saw villages where Boves and his

captains had swept like prairie fire, only the church still standing; they saw regions of wild Indians. A slow journey. More than once, Bolivar had to turn back a day's march to check on the boats. At Urbana, on the right bank of the Orinoco flowing north before it meets the Apure, they found charred ruins. But on the hot sands, the turtles, travelers like the army, had come great distances to lay their luscious eggs, and the men had a holiday respite from manioc bread and jerked meat. In one month, they reached the ranch of Cañafístola, near the village of San Juan de Payara, south of San Fernando, where Páez waited.

He bestrode a white horse (he believed white horses the best swimmers), before two thousand massed men whose half-wild steeds with neither saddle nor bit stood firm and obedient to the knee. The men were unshod, legs naked but for short breeches of roebuck skin; with white shirt and a silver medal at each bare throat. They bore lances of hard wood burned to a point of steel precision. Beside them was a company of Cunaviche Indians, naked except for the loincloth; Páez had named their chief a Brigadier General of the Republic of Venezuela. Bolivar jumped from his horse, and when Páez saw the little man, immaculately uniformed, walk toward him, he too dismounted. He was a good three inches taller, seven years younger, than Bolivar. They embraced, and the two thousand lifted their broad-rimmed hats, exposing the neckerchiefs that closely bound their heads.

Bolivar knew that it was he who was on trial. He did not conceal his mantuano habits: he bathed twice daily in a rubber tub, he shaved and brushed his teeth, his linen was always fresh; but he rode like a llanero, he chewed the same beef and cassava bread, he slept in a chinchorro, the native hammock woven of cactus, or on the ground on a cowhide. He stressed neither his fitness, nor his distinction, wearing leadership as he wore his hat; and his easeful presence impressed Páez. They planned an immediate attack on Calabozo.

This cattle center, halfway between San Fernando de Apure and Caracas, once the home of Boves, was a metropolis of the

plains with roads south to the great rivers, north to the fertile valleys, west to the Andes and New Granada. The Spaniard Morillo possessed a realm fifteen hundred miles long, west to the Pacific, south to royalist Peru, north and east to the Atlantic — solid except for the island, Margarita, the half desert llanos, and Angostura, the ridiculous “capital without a country.” (Even Mexico in this beginning 1818 was Spain’s again; only part of Chile and Buenos Aires were free; but Morillo knew that a fresh army would soon land in Peru to crush San Martín, the Argentine general, the one successful rebel — and even San Martín was victorious only in the Pampa; every time he tried to invade High Peru, the mountaineers of Charcas drove him back.)

Morillo was a good general. Son of a shepherd in Zamora, recommended by Wellington to Spain’s king, he had earned his titles, *Pacificador de las Américas* and Count of Cartagena. Rumor reached him of movements south of Calabozo. He considered an attack on Angostura, and decided against it: Let Bolivar show his hand. To observe better, he marched to Calabozo with a good part of his veterans, half Spaniard, half American. If Bolivar again were so rash as to come out into the field, he from the north, with the army of San Fernando at the south, would crush him between them.

The soldiers of Bolivar and Páez numbered five thousand, not counting auxiliaries and Indian helpers: a respectable force in that land of flood and dearth, ravaged by seven years of carnage. Before it had forded the innumerable streams toward San Fernando, a tenth was lost by malaria and desertion. Confronting its breastworks and parapets, Bolivar decided to by-pass San Fernando. Leave a strong enemy in one’s rear? it seemed folly to Páez. They avoided the main road to Calabozo, covering the rough hundred miles — artillery, supplies — in three days; and pounced on Morillo with such precocity that the Spaniard, leaping to horse, cried: “An army? Where the devil does it come from?”

Like all towns of the plains, Calabozo is a crisscross of squat streets, their sun-hardened monotony relieved by a few gracious

balconied façades and stout churches; but on three sides . . . north, west and south . . . it is bounded by a river. Deep furrowed rocks hold icy springs, and the trees and the black earth suffuse a delicious coolness that the sun cannot disperse. In these oases Morillo's troops were enjoying their ease. The division south of the town, before it could wake, was overwhelmed; the other, with heavy loss, fled into the city. Unable to take it by assault, Bolivar called on Morillo to surrender, and marched fifteen miles north to the village of El Rastro. The Spaniard did not deign to answer; Bolivar knew he would withdraw northward under cover of night toward Valencia to re-form his shattered force; and as soon as Bolivar learned his route he intended to waylay him.

Now the old enemy struck, the true enemy: discord. Páez, already amazed at the by-passing of San Fernando which to him was the real goal: the capital of *his* country, opposed the pursuit north. He argued well: in the mountain valley, the royalists converging from both north and east would overwhelm them; their own force was too weak; the enemy at their rear in San Fernando was still intact; and, finally, his centaurs of the plains could not fight, he said, or breathe in the high lands. Bolivar answered: they would attack the several armies one by one before they converged; they would enlarge their force in the fertile valleys; the capture of Caracas and its port, La Guaira, would be a beacon shining across the seas, drawing credit and goods; San Fernando would spontaneously fall, if cut off from the coast as it was already from the lower Orinoco; and were not the centaurs of Páez the same men who under Boves had won great victories in the high lands, sweeping the republicans into the sea from Caracas and Barcelona?

All night they wrangled, while the camp whispered and the contagion of discord spread. Páez was very sure he was right, although what he said was mere rationalization of his instinct to stay in the plains which were his country, his source of power, his sole defense against dominance by Bolivar. It was Bolivar who found himself divided. Was he not longing again for his beloved Caracas? Oh, the reasons for it were strong!

when one defeated an enemy one must follow through. But deeply, he sided with Páez; the time was not yet for the conquest of his home! he must remain at the dark heart of Venezuela.

He let Páez return to Calabozo, which Morillo had abandoned, while his enemies quarreled. Officers murmured that Páez wished to sack the town. Páez demanded an apology. "Find the man who dared say this against you," said Bolívar, "and I will have him shot." Páez was appeased, but a malaria of disaffection was within the army.

While Páez with all his men turned back south toward San Fernando, Bolívar was still resolved to strike north. To mask the disagreement, he reported to Angostura that he had ordered this action of Páez. He recalled Zaraza in the west with a force of cavalry—to make good the loss of Páez. Rumor came of panic in Caracas; the royalists were fleeing to La Guaira. But the days of dissension between Bolívar and Páez let Morillo, safe in the valley of Aragua, re-form his troops; the royalists, heartened again, took the steep road back from La Guaira to Caracas. Bolívar's conflict is revealed in his ambiguous tactics. Either he should have insisted that Páez, his subordinate, come north with him against Morillo, and at once; or turned his whole army back against San Fernando. He split his strength; and having lost the advantage of immediate attack after initial victory, he followed—limpingly—with an amputated and demoralized army. His will drove him, and anger (he would *show* Páez!). Bolívar became a poor general, an artist imitating his own work (the campaign of 1813) in the old idiom, but without the old conviction.

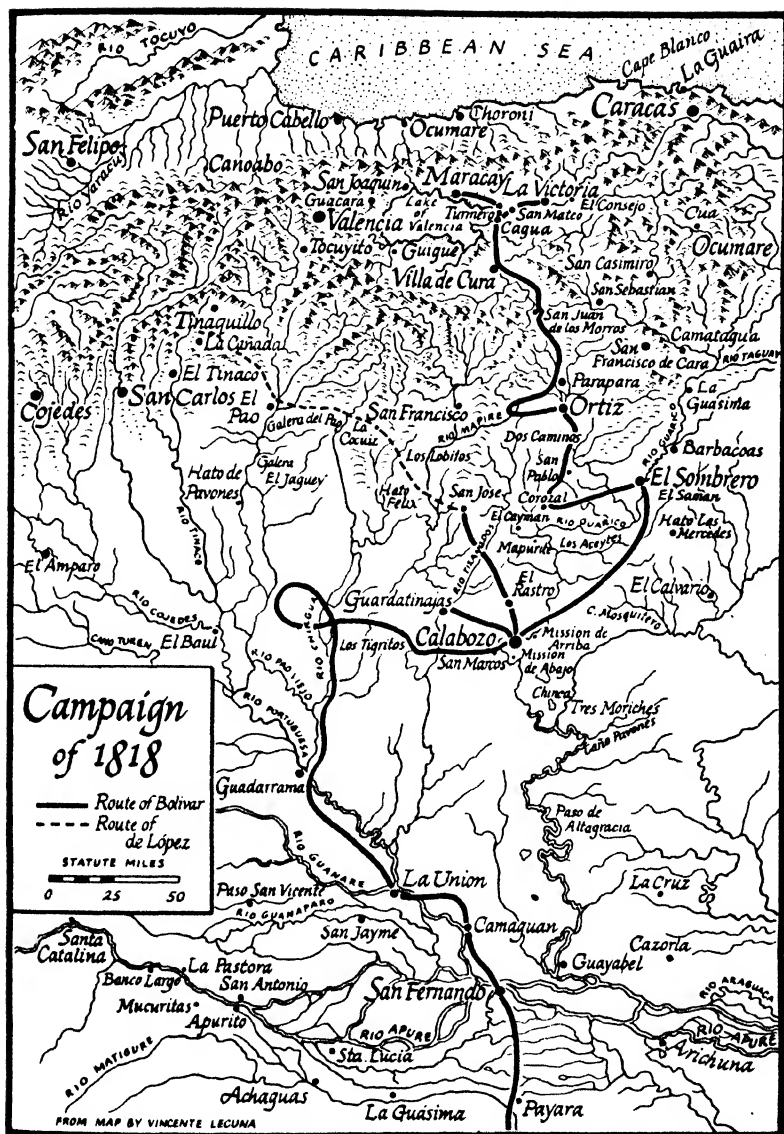
He climbed after Morillo into the valley of Aragua, winning skirmishes over the royalist rearguard. He got to Maracay, where Zaraza joined him, and turned east toward Caracas. At San Mateo, the men and women he had freed embraced him and wept; the estate had a new master and they were slaves again. He tried to increase his forces, but the people of the valley were sick of war and the King seemed a better security for peace. At his rear, the royalists broke through the battalions

he had placed in Maracay to protect his advance; Morillo, fully replenished, flanked him, and Bolivar was surrounded. Barely he plunged out of the noose, fought his way south again; and turned to face the enemy on the meseta of Semen, where the mountains fall into the plain. Down came Morillo with his bright-uniformed regulars against Bolivar's men in rags, without artillery (it had been left behind in Calabozo), the river Guarico at their backs. Over a third of the republicans were lost; the remainder fled to the savannahs. Even now, Bolivar refused to give up. He retired to Calabozo, reorganized the fragments of several divisions into a new unit, naming it "el batallón sagrado"² — a hint of his desperate mood; and hurried a plea to Páez to reinforce him. Páez had captured San Fernando, and his army grew with success. He sent Bolivar a mere thousand men, left a strong garrison in San Fernando, and with the bulk of his power thrust west and north toward San Carlos.

Bolivar was in no immediate danger from Morillo who had paid heavily for his successes. But in the west, a new threat gathered. Rafael López, a Venezuelan royalist who had been second in command at the battle of Urica, and matched Boves in cruelty and cunning, was rousing the scattered King's men of the whole province. Bolivar urged Páez to break López before he became too strong. Even before he left Angostura, Bolivar had warned Zaraza and Monagas: "López, who surely will replace La Torre in command, is brave and shrewd; knows the country well, has a following, and can be expected to attempt surprises and daring operations."

López was not easy to find. Bolivar, with López somewhere on his left and Morillo on his right, pointed first west, then east — a compass between two magnets; zigzagging his troops in useless marches, wearing them out, making no contact. Officers and men, dispirited, began to desert. Colonel Santander who was now on his staff, wondered if the General was seeking his own destruction. Bolivar rode at the head of his men,

2 "The sacred battalion."



muffled in a pilgrim's cloak, his head down, brooding; and when an officer addressed him he answered without lifting his eyes. At last he learned where López was (he had evaded Páez). Bolivar advanced to the village of San José, ready to strike; then suddenly fell back again and camped in a field called Rincón de los Toros, across the river from the village.

It was the night of April 16, 1818; there had been three months of ineffectual campaigning. A sergeant deserted and found his way to López, telling him the exact position of Bolivar. López called his Captain Tomás de Renovales, a native of Calabozo, gave him a detachment of men and the deserter to guide him. The plan was to kill Bolivar.

The sergeant led the way straight to the copse of trees where Bolivar and his staff had hung their hammocks. Instructed by the deserter, Renovales spoke the password, told the sentry he had an urgent message for the General, and asked to be led to him. The men with pistols in their hands moved forward through the dark, until Santander stopped them. An hour before, Bolivar had told Santander and Zaraza to stay awake and on guard; then he had fallen asleep. The captain from Calabozo repeated his story to Santander, who stood only a few feet from Bolivar's hammock. "My General, my General," Santander called. Bolivar awoke; and in the instant of waking, as if Santander's voice echoed his previous anxiety, he hurled himself down from his hammock. A volley of shots cracked the black silence. The men in the adjoining hammocks, a colonel and a chaplain, were killed as they slept; a third was wounded. Bolivar leaped to his horse, tethered nearby, and the beast fell under him, riddled. He raced on foot into the dark plain, while the camp boiled into action. López had stolen close under cover of the night, and attacked when the shots signaled. At dawn Bolivar found himself in a field studded with chaparral and stunted trees; hills enclosed the horizon; he was lost. Vague sounds of battle came to him, it seemed, from all directions. A couple of mounted men galloped close; he saw they were of his army, and they were flee-

ing. He stopped them and asked to be taken to the battle. They refused. "Bolivar is dead," they told him, and spurred their horses.

At last an officer came up who knew him, and gave him place on his saddle. With the remnants of his troops, thirteen days later, Bolivar rode into San Fernando, the capital of Páez.

López, the Venezuelan who planned to kill Bolivar, died in the fight at the camp. An officer found his horse, identified by the silver initials on the ornate saddle, and gave it to Bolivar who rode it to San Fernando. Perhaps the symbol of this, the shock of the miraculous escape, the hours alone on the dark plain, affirmed Bolivar's sense of destiny — as had the flight from La Guaira in 1812, from Carúpano in 1814, from Cartagena in 1815, from Ocumare and Güiria in 1816. And now he had been thrust, not from his land into the sea, but from his land's periphery (the coast and Caracas) back into the heart. Gone was the cloud of confusion, in which he had staggered and fought through the whole unfortunate campaign from January to April. When Bolivar rode into San Fernando, he was again himself.

Foreign soldiers, predominantly British, had begun to arrive. After the Napoleonic Wars, Britain was in a deep depression; thousands of ex-soldiers begged in the streets; and to the incentive of want was added the romantic motive, strong in Byron's England and O'Connell's Ireland, to seek adventure in the tropics and help a gallant people fighting for its life. The soldiers who came knew war. There were among them, of course, drunkards, loafers, scoundrels, arrogant officers, like Colonel Hippisley, who wanted to run the show and put the "natives" in their places. But also there were admirable men, who helped make Colombian history. In March, 1818, for example, came the eighteen-year-old Irish second lieutenant, Daniel Florence O'Leary, a cousin of Edmund Burke and of Daniel O'Connell, who was to be one of Bolivar's trusted aides and diplomats, and his first chronicler. Most of these early arrivals (a minority were French, Polish, Scandinavian,

German) were sent west to Páez and his army of the Apure. The total finally reached four thousand.

At once in San Fernando, Bolivar began to reorganize his forces, to renew his battery of letters and instructions to Brión, to Angostura, to London, to the newly arrived British officers, to the Spanish republican General Renovales. But his body was too strained; he fell into a fever and an ignominious attack of carbuncles kept him from his horse, even from sitting on a chair. He dictated, standing or lying in his hammock. Arms! Mules! Men! "We must neglect no means to increase the army; it grows weaker each day by desertions; very well; if the soldiers do not tire of deserting we shall not tire of recruiting." Could General Renovales not persuade the Spanish veterans to come over, like himself, as citizens of Venezuela — of a new world? At last he cried: "If in three days I still cannot mount a horse, I shall have myself carried to Angostura in a hammock."

Páez was campaigning toward the northwest. To Brión, Bolivar frankly laid the blame for the failure toward Caracas on Páez, but he felt no resentment. What if they had taken Caracas? How would it have been better than the victory of 1813? The instinct of the plainsman to secure the heart of his land was Bolivar's own! Why else the capital at Angostura? The campaign had taught Bolivar to *know* Páez, as a function of himself. And Bolivar now was sure he knew Santander. The Granadan lawyer-soldier had been Castillo's man; now, he would be Bolivar's! Bolivar wrote him warm, wooing letters.

Toward the end of the month, the Job's carbuncles relented: the Lord had learned their vanity, perhaps, against the spirit of this servant. Before the second week of June, Bolivar was back in Angostura.

ARMS AND WORDS

SPAIN on all the peripheries of the republic was the hot-frame of closer troubles. Bermúdez had become loyal, but he lacked the gift to replace Mariño as leader of Oriente, and Mariño

was constant in his old inconstancy: sullen, stubborn, he thrust here and there, whirled about with the work half done, refusing to co-operate even with Bermúdez; and not one important victory could the two forge together. Arismendi in Margarita was incapable of seeing beyond his island or his ego. Now, almost as swift as Bolívar's march back to Angostura, came bad news about Páez. . . .

Among the foreign legionaries was a Colonel Henry Wilson. Before sailing from London, Wilson wrote to Lord Castlereagh in Downing Street, offering his services and begging for an interview. He was going to Venezuela as an officer; Britain of course could not be formally represented in the patriot army, but her interests, commercial, possibly territorial, might make use of a secret agent. If England could not employ him, Colonel Wilson hinted, he knew of other governments that could. There is no record of talks between the Colonel and the Foreign Office. But not a week after Bolívar, freed at last of his carbuncles, left San Fernando, Wilson was at work. He had sized up both Bolívar and Páez, and concluded that Páez was his man. He invited him to a banquet of the foreign legionnaires; when enough rum had flowed, he toasted Páez as Chief of Venezuela. Páez was flattered; the officers huzzaed, the colonel went out to the llaneros, and soon the whole army of the Apure was shouting for the new Supreme Commander. Wilson drew up a proclamation, which a number of officers signed, and proceeded to Angostura to gain converts for his revolution. More than forty years later, Páez, an old man, sat in a comfortable room in a New York hotel and dictated his memoirs. He knew nothing, he insists, of Wilson's intrigue. But the heavy years and the desperate need to look well in history are powerful refractors. Páez invited Wilson and his fellow officers to a return banquet; Páez was not deaf to the clamor of his men who had fought with Bolívar as "allies" rather than soldiers of Bolívar's army. Cunning and caution held Páez back from openly acknowledging the proclamation; but there is not the slightest doubt that he knew what dish was brewing, and that its taste was sweet.

In Angostura, Bolivar jailed Wilson; and then deported him. The archives of Madrid reveal that the Colonel was also an *agent provocateur* of Spain; men of this family often serve two masters. Back in London, Wilson wrote mendacious letters to Castlereagh claiming that British subjects were cheated and maltreated by Bolivar. But doubtless Downing Street knew with whom it dealt. The Empire might have found it convenient to get rid of Bolivar and exploit the more amenable Páez. But when the trick failed, the agent was cast out.

To Páez, Bolivar sent an impersonal army order, "informing" him of the Colonel's treachery to the nation, and asking Páez to arrest Wilson's confederates. Páez took the hint. Even if he had been inclined to rigorous action against Páez, who was as guilty as Piar had been, Bolivar was in no position for it.

Before Brión went up the Orinoco in the campaign for Angostura, he had declared a blockade of the river and its mouth, and published it in the maritime news of Norfolk, Virginia: the one possible method of announcement, since the northern republic had not recognized the new nation. Two American ships, the *Tiger* and the *Liberty*, sailed south with a cargo of guns for the Spanish army, which they intended to exchange for livestock and hides. Aware of the blockade, they slipped through Brión's boats by night. But when they got to Guayana la Antigua (where Bolivar had nearly lost his life), Brión's men were in the forts and the two ships were taken. The skippers and the sailors readily agreed to do business with the Republic instead of Spain; but a surprise royal force came down the river; and Brión to save them from the Spaniards scuttled the two American vessels. Now Mr. Baptis Irvine, Baltimore journalist and politician, arrived in Angostura. The town welcomed him as the "ambassador" of the sister republic, and Bolivar sustained the happy fiction. But Mr. Irvine's sole official business was to collect a United States claim for the loss of the two ships. His argument was that the blockade was ineffectual, hence invalid; and since Brión's alleged enforcement was partially by land, the blockade was no blockade at

all. Bolivar held that his country had exercised the right of a belligerent nation in intercepting war materiel destined for the enemy. He did not intend to pay, but he was far more eager not to antagonize the United States; he went to extraordinary trouble to convince Mr. Irvine . . . to bring *him* to the right decision. He wrote him many letters. Failing to persuade him, he proposed a board of neutral arbiters. Only when Mr. Irvine refused and resorted to insult did Bolivar close the correspondence . . . on a note of sorrow. His letters were long, gracious, meticulously briefed; they reveal poignantly Bolivar's naïve reluctance to doubt the friendliness of the North American Republic.

His patience was both wide and deep. Finance, devices for assuming new debts without writing off the old ones, the production and transport of barterable goods, the logistics of troops and supplies for future action, focused his eye to minute details. When Spain, powerless to end the struggle of her kingdom by force, tried a new method: "mediation" through the Holy Alliance, Bolivar was ready with briefs for his advocates in London, Paris, Washington, to forestall the threat of intervention. In the first years, England had offered to mediate, Venezuela had been willing, Spain had refused. It was too late, after the hundreds of thousands dead, the towns burned, the land ravaged. The Republic would treat with Spain only as equal with equal. Short of that, Bolivar told his envoys to explain, it was all one to the new nation whether it fought Spain alone, or the Holy Alliance — or the world. He drew a picture of an entire people whose fury for freedom had burned away the oxygen of compromise from the air they breathed. The Chancelleries of Europe were impressed; Spain's appeal for forced "mediation" was rejected.

Less than a month after Bolivar's return from San Fernando, appeared the first newspaper of the American savannahs. The *Correo del Orinoco* would voice the mind of the Republic. The *Gaceta de Caracas*, edited by the brilliant Díaz, fought for the King with every device of propaganda: falsified

news of America and the world, letters forged or doctored of republican leaders. The *Correo* took up the dialogue; favorable events were selected and accented, but it told no overt lies, falsified no letters. Learned articles on the philosophy of continental government larded the business items of the river town.

The eight years had not only bled the land, they had bred apathy in the survivors. Intercepted letters from Caracas taught Bolivar that the royalists too were sick and tired. Acedia was the medium in which corruption and compromise could grow. Anything — or worse, *nothing* might happen, unless the enthusiasm of the people were geared to the long vast struggle. Bolivar labored at the heart of his unborn nation: it must beat strong enough (miraculously!) to create its body. His way was the artist's, rather than the statesman's. And he enlisted the intellectuals to help him. The *Correo* became their theater. In its first issue, dated Saturday, June 27, 1818, the readers found the message of Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, supreme director of Buenos Aires and the United Provinces of La Plata: a free land so remote that the message took nineteen months to arrive. In the name of his citizens, Pueyrredón hailed "heroic Venezuela," foretold the day when from his South and Bolivar's North the liberating armies would converge on Peru, "dark center where, in its last trench, dying despotism clings." They found Bolivar's answer: "I have been barely able to keep the mighty course on which my country guides me . . . one, and only one, must be the Fatherland of all Americans."

Was his picture false? Nine-tenths of all Venezuelans still lived in the King's land; a good half everywhere were the King's men, and even the republicans were in large measure discouraged, apathetic, or devoted, like Páez, Mariño, Arismendi, only to their little local provinces. The prophet's license clears Bolivar of deception. He was sure Spain in the Americas was doomed; he was sure the beat of his heart and his will . . . isolate though it seemed from the common temper . . . expressed his people's deepest rhythm. (This accord was his destiny.) The same distortion of immediate fact by the dimen-

sion of invading truth was in his other letters. England, he wrote, was "about to tweak Spain's nose" (they were actual allies against France); the United States was "about to fight Spain for Florida" (the cession was peaceful); "an ambassador was on his way from Washington" (Mr. Irvine was a rude debt collector); troops and supplies were pouring in "by torrents" (the dearth continued). Bolivar was fraudulent — but in the way of the poet-prophet, through whose vision the future warps the recalcitrant present.

Week after week, the *Correo* issued forth from its pitiful handpress with its blurred type, but on four pages of good linen paper that has preserved its record of an awakening world. Intellectuals like Peñalver, Fajardo, Santander, write ponderous leaders. Bolivar under a *nom de plume* satirizes the journalist Díaz and his fellow flunkys of the King. Intercepted letters of Morillo and other royalists are faithfully printed, and editorially refuted. For instance, Morillo's report to Madrid: "Perhaps the inhabitants of New Granada would not have offered such resistance, had it not been for the Venezuelans. . . . Cartagena fought to an impossible extreme, because of the Venezuelans. . . . All, your Majesty, is the work of Venezuelans." Santander, from remote Casanare, indignantly replies: "Granadans are quite as brave, quite as liberty-loving, as the Venezuelans. . . ." Humbler items flank the affairs of state, and give it color. Movements of ships, British, American, Scandinavian. Merchants' announcements (in modest pica italic) of the arrival of goods: ladies' sewing cases, saddles, exquisite textiles, pocket knives and beer. Mr. George Bryan, British surgeon with diplomas from the best colleges of Europe, informs prospective patients that he resides next to the Admiralty Office. The new *stimbót* (steamboat) plies regularly from Trinidad to the Orinoco, where Admiral Brión plans a regular service of the modern wonder — capable in any wind or weather of six and a half miles per hour. (Had he survived the war, surely Brión would have been the Cornelius Vanderbilt of South America.) A merchant captain (in English) defends the mouth of the Orinoco from its bad name for naviga-

tion; a whole page expounds the channel to all pilots. The first ship flying Venezuela's flag has docked in New York! Spain's internal state becomes intolerable; revolution threatens. The *Correo Brasileuse* is a heretic, denying the right of the citizens of Pernambuco to revolt, on the grounds that "their King is in the country." The learned pamphlet "*Triumph of Liberty over Despotism*" is on exclusive sale at a certain dry-goods store. The master of the British sloop *Jackman* offers a liberal reward for the return of five Negroes, his property, who have made off with provisions, clothing, and eighteen pieces of gold. And in the legislature of Kentucky, a representative, Mr. Henry Clay, has spoken nobly in favor of South American independence.

Shortly after his first arrival in Angostura, Bolivar had named a provisional council of government: ministers of state, war and commerce, and a judicial court. Now he proposed the election of a Constituent Congress. The army, he said, for the first time had what it needed to fight; the enemy would be attacked simultaneously on all fronts; he suggested a committee to formulate the procedure of elections, and at once left for the field. Six men were chosen, among them the able jurist Fernando Peñalver, comrade of the early days in Caracas, whose conservative political ideas had more influence on Bolivar than the romantic thought of Rousseau and Rodríguez. The committee made plans for the election of deputies: five each from the provinces of Margarita, Guayana, Caracas, Barcelona and Barinas, which had armies in the field; five from the entirely isolated Andean provinces of Mérida and Trujillo; five from the Granadan border province of Casanare, over which Santander presided. There were, now, legally, no slaves in Venezuela: every man honorably employed (excluding domestic servants) was an elector. Actually, the soldiers did the voting, since, with the exception of Margarita and Guayana, the greatest parts of all the provinces were still Spanish. The Congress would "replace that of 1812, dissolved by capitulation" of Miranda.

While the elections dragged on, from village to village, camp to camp, during the last three months of 1818, Bolivar was in the saddle. He rode northeast to Maturín, to confer with Mariño and Bermúdez; he went west again to Páez in the Apure. The Wilson incident was buried. Páez, who learned swiftly, was absorbing what he could use of the military science of the British legionnaires and struggling with the far tougher problem of acclimatizing them in his army of roughriders. The close of the Napoleonic Wars had left the British tailors with thousands of uniforms which they dumped at bargain rates into the boats of Brión. The British came in them, and they were better fitted for guard duty at Buckingham Palace than for fighting in the swamps and plains where the mercury by day seldom fell below ninety degrees. Bolivar had alluded to "the liberal foreigners . . . athirst for useful glory." Their liberal ideas had prepared them for a land of milk and honey and mellifluous ladies. Scarlet uniforms with green lapels, green uniforms with scarlet lapels, revealed the outlandish notions in their minds. Soon they were going about half-naked; but their assumption of superiority to the natives was not so easily discarded. Páez knew how to deal with them, and he was now entirely at ease with Bolivar.

Nearly five years before, the Argentine General José de San Martín, weary of the fruitless frontal attacks on the royalists entrenched in High Peru, had retired to obscure Mendoza, beneath the Andes bordering on Chile. And there he remained to create an army with another purpose. In February, 1817 (when Bolivar at last, after the defeat at Clarines, was deciding to join Piar at Guayana), San Martín crossed the highest Andes into Chile, and fell upon the Spaniards in Chacabuco. He entered Santiago, where Bernardo O'Higgins was chief; and on April 5, 1818, at the great battle of Maipu, he threw the Spaniards out of Chile forever. Now the news of San Martín came to Bolivar. He assumed that the Argentinian would proceed north to Peru (actually the expeditionary army did not sail from Valparaiso until August, 1820). He recalled the message of Pueyrredón (which had taken nearly two years to

reach him). A northern army must converge southward with San Martín moving north, to crush the Spaniards in Peru.

San Martín, he thought, must be already on his way. And he could operate thus far from his base because the base was strong: Buenos Aires, and now Chile, Bolívar figured, were solidly free. It was time for the northern claw of the great continental pincers to close south. If only Venezuela were solid! Bolívar's plan, although not final, had been, until now, to outflank Morillo by an advance west from Apure through Casanare over the Andes of New Granada to Bogotá, thence north to Cartagena and back again east to Morillo and Caracas. Suddenly a new dream gripped him. Santander (whom he had just promoted to Brigadier General) would go south to join with San Martín against Peru. Meanwhile, Páez would have struck north toward the coast of Venezuela; Mariño and Bermúdez would have driven Morillo from the coastal cities of Oriente; and he (Bolívar) would sail down the Orinoco and to some port — Ocumare, Maracaibo — where he would join forces with Páez to destroy Morillo. He wrote of the new plan to Páez and Mariño. To Justo Briceño, he wrote: "The day of America has come. . . . Help General Santander; obey him, unite with him." He galloped east to perfect the campaign with Mariño; and sent final orders to Páez to be ready to strike north.

In the light of the twelve years still before Bolívar, and of the century after his death, it is poignant to imagine what might have been, had this campaign been fought. Its premise, of course, must be the solidity of Venezuela under united leaders. That solidity existed in none of the republics with which Bolívar had to work. When he declared his "war to the death," in order to create Americans, *Venezuelans* also had to be created; the men of the Andes and the men hundreds of miles east in Oriente hardly felt a common ground called Venezuela. And their chiefs? Bolívar knew Mariño, Arismendi, Bermúdez. But at times he acted as if he refused to know; like a poet so enamored of his vision that despite his clarity, he does violence to facts. The campaign

never got started; Mariño and Bermúdez captured no cities, defeated no army; Páez stayed in his "little country" — and soon lost its capital, San Fernando! Santander in consequence never received his orders to converge south on Peru and San Martín. The leaders could *not* march together, Venezuela was *not* solid. And this was not chance; this was of the essence of the land and its people. Bolivar was thrust back upon the need of *writing every word of his poem*. It was not accidental that the disunion of the nation, and of the continent which to him was the nation, fed dangerous traits in him: bred his artist's need to hold all in his own hands, bred his artist's lust for personal glory — while it gave him the substance for creation. The weaknesses of the people of America Hispana, Bolivar knew, were fruit of their history. These weaknesses gave occasion to Bolivar's greatness — and made his own weaknesses great. As the reader follows the victories of Bolivar, let him bear in mind "what might have been," if fatality had permitted him to send another general south toward San Martín and Peru; if Venezuela had been solid — if he had been able to remain to make it solid. . . .

The Congress was to have convened on the first day of the new year, 1819. But many of the delegates were not yet in Angostura, and Bolivar, who was to inaugurate the sessions, was still on his way back from a final interview with Páez. He wrote and rewrote his speech on board a narrow sampan, with an awning between his head and the fierce sun; and at night in camp, while the smudge fires fought the cindery clouds of mosquitoes and the womb-like jungle with bird-calls and the wail of jaguars closed in upon him.

The night before the conclave finally opened, there were artillery salvos and fireworks in the principal square (where Piar had been sacrificed). Next day at dawn, again the guns saluted; the deputies walked through the patio of the municipal palace, up the stone stair, into the oblong room paneled in tropic woods with a raised platform and upholstered chairs for the presiding officers, the tall windows open to the plaza

where the people stood cheering. Among the deputies were the lawyers Zea, Peñalver, Urbaneja, Fajardo, Roscío, and the Generals Santiago Mariño, Mariano Montilla, Urdaneta. Only twenty-seven were present: one each was missing from Cumaná, Margarita, Guayana; the Andean provinces and Casanare were not represented at all. On side seats sat visitors, among them Mr. Irvine and a leading British merchant; the walls and windows were lined with as many townsfolk as the space would hold. Francisco Antonio Zea, quartermaster of the Army and mayor of Angostura, was chosen chairman. Then Bolivar got up, and read his long speech which a secretary had hurriedly copied from his own much-blotted manuscript. When he finished, many of the auditors were in tears. "Gentlemen," he said quietly, "begin your functions; I have concluded mine." He gave his baton, sign of his temporary dictatorial powers, to Zea, and stepped down from the platform.

Zea's speech, which followed, was full of classic instances. Memphis, Thebes, Palmyra, Alexandria, Tyre — "*y tu, también, soberbia Roma*" — had been mean and miserable hamlets; and grew great through the greatness of their sons — as would this capital, Angostura. General Bolivar had borne the burden of authority, when to be chief of Venezuela was little more than a jest among the nations; now that the title acquired dignity this Congress, he said, was in no mood to take it from him. By acclamation, Bolivar was sustained in office. Bolivar got up and declined. Speaking from the floor, he said his place was the field (he was not a deputy); tomorrow, he was leaving to join the western army. He would never accept again an authority which his heart, his sentiments and his principles opposed. It was against public safety to continue one man too long in office. It was a danger to give civil power, except in times of crisis, to a soldier. The crisis was past. In Congress were many equipped for the first magistracy. He left the hall. Later, a delegation came to his house above the city: the Congress refused his resignation. He sent back a written message:

Painful experience has proved how incompatible are the functions of magistrate and defender of the Republic. We have suffered many

reverses because of the union of the military and the civil powers, for one man cannot deal with the conservation of peace and the exercise of war; one man can hardly unite the qualities needed for both tribunal and camp. Moreover, I have found in the practice of public affairs that strength is inadequate for the tasks of a state that is both militant and infant. . . . The Congress has named a vice-president to officiate in my absence. I shall be always absent (waging war); thus in fact the vice-president will be the first magistrate of the nation. And since the choice has so aptly and wisely fallen upon the honorable representative Zea, chairman of the Congress, I make bold to beg again that my resignation from the Presidency of the State be admitted.

The Congress again and finally declined, ordering General Bolivar to remain President *pro tem* until under the new constitution elections could be held. He was also confirmed as General of the Army. Zea was chosen Vice-President, in charge of the Executive during the President's absence; Manuel Palacio Fajardo became Minister of State and Treasury; Pedro Briceño Méndez (Bolivar's chief secretary) was Minister of War and Navy. A salvo of artillery and fireworks was ordered "upon the night of this day."

In his last interview with Páez, the campaign had been determined; a march across the Andes to Bogotá, which Bolivar hoped would succeed, if only because Morillo in Venezuela would not dream it possible. Now he gave the manuscript of the speech he had just read to the learned Fajardo, asking him to correct it, to publish it in the *Correo*, and to have it translated into English. Then Bolivar went to the wharf, high above the shrunken River, and sailed west to join Páez.

A month later, already in Apure, Bolivar received a letter from Fajardo:

. . . the speech of your excellency is like a painter's garden, in which have been placed roses, lilies, tuberoses, and other lovely flowers, side by side with the field scabious and the borage: also fair growths but not worthy companions of the lily and the rose. For example, please observe that the beginning, "*Fortunate is the citizen,*" should be omitted; it would be better to start directly with "*I count myself among the fortunate*"; for this second phrase is an applica-

tion of the first. . . . Mr. Hamilton's translation gains in some points over the original . . . another advantage is, that he writes good English. . . . The Spanish of your excellency is not always pure. . . .

Fajardo and Bolivar remained friends.

THE ANGOSTURA ADDRESS

THE ANGOSTURA address, the most renowned of Bolivar's speeches, is frequently praised for the wrong reason. Here, say the gourmets of romantic situations, was a man in a mud village, a warrior thrust by eight years' adverse struggle into the outer dark of a wild river, a leader with the Amazon jungle at his back and before him the desert and the dearth of a ruined people still submissive to the King; yet he dares to discuss the detailed law of a vast republic bounded by two oceans, a hemisphere of freedom! But the striking premise of Bolivar's speech is that it *discounts Spain* — *and rightly*, although Spain's armies were still victorious from Mexico south to the frontiers of Chile and La Plata. The value of the speech, almost unique in the utterance of statesmen, is Bolivar's knowledge that the "enemy is within us"; is the precise penetration to an ethnic-cultural problem to which the site of Angostura, the state of Venezuelan economics, even the issue of battles, were only indirectly relevant. The address is about a deeper war than Spain's. And about this deeper war, Bolivar's words are dark with hesitance and foreboding. Bolivar in arms against the royalists was usually simple and swift as lightning; here he is full of trammelled tragic doubt!

The oration begins with an analysis of the state of the peoples. "The epoch of the republic . . . has been no mere political storm, no bloody war, not public anarchy, but the growth of every disrupting element." The cause? "Consult the annals of Spain, of America, of Venezuela." In this "high sea of anxieties," Bolivar declares he has been tossed like a straw, "unable to *act*, either rightly or wrongly." (A public

leader knowing he is the instrument of forces greater than he!) The dissolution of Spain's mighty empire (he takes for granted that it is dissolving) has been likened to the fall of Rome, each of whose dismembered parts became a nation. But beware of quick similitudes! "We are not Europeans, we are not Indians; rather we are a middle term between aborigines and Spaniards. American by our birth, European by our law . . . our condition has been passive." Again, the theme of the Jamaica letters: unlike the subjects of Turkey, Tartary or China, ruled by satraps of their own, Americans, receiving everything from alien Spain, have been deprived "even of the satisfaction and exercise of active tyranny." (This profound insight into the genesis of political culture remained with Bolivar.) "Bound to the triple yoke of ignorance, external tyranny and corruption, we have been able to acquire neither knowledge, power nor virtue. . . ." Ruthless, he paints a psychological portrait; and at its climax: "Legislators, meditate your election well. You are free; now find the right government — or slavery will be the terminus of our transformation." "All nations have been victims of their governments . . . yet it is the peoples, rather than their governments, which call forth tyranny." Only democracy, he asserts, confers liberty. And according to Rousseau, liberty is a succulent dish, but difficult to digest. What democratic government, he asks, has ever united at one time strength, prosperity, stability? Again, as in Cartagena in 1812, he assails the feeble federalism of the first republic. The fatal error shall not be repeated! He wonders at the success of the federal United States (a few years later, he will predict the Civil War). But the Anglo-American Colonies possessed a heritage of self-rule, and the American President wields a central power vastly more cogent than was given to the triumvirate in Caracas. He quotes Montesquieu: "It is a marvelous accident when the laws of one nation fit another." "Our people is not Europe, not North America; rather than an emanation of Europe, it is a compound of Africa and America, for Spain herself is more Africa than Europe." And so, having examined Athens, Sparta, Rome and England, he pleads with the

legislators to consider the British Constitution. Let there be a Lower House, chosen by the people; and a hereditary Senate like Rome's and the House of Lords. "Unity, unity, unity . . . must be our watchword. . . . Solid foundation." Let not the delegates be confused by republican rhetoric. The lower House should choose the first Senate; and who are worthier candidates than the men who fight to free America, the liberators?

A monarch in America, Bolivar submits, is an absurdity: the very land calls for a commoner to preside. But give him wide power! for "in republics everything conspires against the executive, even as in monarchies everything conspires in favor of the monarch." He does not go into details except to intimate that the presidential term should be sufficiently long to prevent an endemic spasm of elections. Then, reaching back to Athens and Rome: their censors and guardians of the law, he suggests a "fourth power" to unify the executive, legislative and judicial: a Moral Power, in whose charge will be the education and the arts of the people, and the conduct of their public servants. He has written (on the river in his boat) a project for this Power; he hopes the Congress will examine it.³ Now his emotion rings out: a people "cannot be both free and slave. . . . I implore you to confirm' the absolute freeing of the slaves, as I would implore you for my life and the life of the Republic." The lens of his vision broadens, he sees "the reunion of New Granada and Venezuela in one great state . . . between the oceans that nature has divided but that our fatherland will join by prolonged and wide canals. . . ."

A profound inward fissure of logic breaks the address. Bolivar finds the anarchy of his people in their ethos: in the blood and marrow of their history — and to cure it, ordains laws! He diagnoses as poet-prophet, inheritor of the Judaeo-Christian-Hispanic tradition; he *prescribes* as an eighteenth-century rationalist. This is a singular contradiction: the men of that age who saw deep (Blake, Goya) were not statesmen. Moses

³ The Constitution drafted by this Congress for Venezuela ignored Bolivar's "fourth power" and made the presidential term four years.

gave the Hebrews six hundred and thirteen laws, but he got them, allegedly from God, actually from a long-growing tradition. The fathers of the United States framed a Constitution — that masterpiece of political mechanics, which merely essenced, balanced and codified the Anglo-Saxon people's way of life. Bolivar strove to be Moses, Madison and Jefferson to a people not yet mature enough to produce them: this was his greatness and his tragedy. The success of science in exploiting mechanical laws of nature inspired the age to re-create society by analogous means. In conscious method, Bolivar belonged to his age — with Napoleon, Jefferson, James Watt. But his vision and his values placed him in a deeper category. And he hardly believed his own prescription as he gave it — or that it could be accepted. The Angostura address is saturnine, almost hysterical in emphasis; the writing is often unclear; remote from his lucid expository prose; and not because he composed it in a sampan and a jungle (he was used to this setting) but because of his own doubts. He was the man who sees; but he was also the seer who *must do*. And for his visionary deed, he had no system beyond his time's: military revolution, benevolent legislation.

THE PLAINS, THE JUNGLE, THE ANDES

THE RAINS of the llanos' eight-month winter (due in April) began early this year of 1819; Bolivar and his army reached the Granadan plain of Casanare with three and a half drenched months behind them. Before leaving Angostura, he gave his co-ordinated plan to Zea, who must supervise, perhaps alter it, as circumstance required, while Bolivar was absent in a world so remote that by contrast even Angostura was a crowded cross-way. Bermúdez, in command of Mariño's forces of the East, was to sustain pressure toward Calabozo; Urdaneta, aided by the Margaritans of Arismendi, was to try for Barcelona and Cumaná and guard the lower Orinoco against a possible break through Brión's blockade by Spanish ships. On June 8, Boli-

var met Páez in Guasdalito, frontier town between Apure and Casanare; and explained his part in the great strategy. Páez with his centaurs must dash around the "left end" of the Andes toward Cúcuta, to divert the Spaniards from Bolivar's direct invasion; and General León Pedro Torres, with the balance of the army of the Apure and a fleet of a hundred and sixteen boats coming up the river, must besiege San Fernando, recently retaken.

The plan was dangerous. Not to attack Morillo directly in Venezuela, leaving him his Caribbean ports, meant the possible arrival of a new great army from Spain. The generals, who were to hold the rear while Bolivar crashed the reputedly impassable backdoor of the Andes, were with the exception of Urdaneta unreliable; and the co-ordinator, Zea, was a weak man with a strong head. Zea could think straight, but was poor at defending the premise of his thought; Bolivar had measured him in Les Cayes, when Zea gave in to the French privateer Aury. Bolivar must employ what he had. . . .

He could not change his generals; they had risen from their men in the first years of war, their ties were forged in many battles. They came from every class: they were feudal patricians like Plaza, Anzoátegui, Mariño, Bolivar himself; slaves or sons of slaves like Rondón and Pedro Camejo, the fierce fighter known as *El Negro Primero*; men of mixed blood like Cedeño and the unhappy Piar. By the loose organization of Venezuelan power, they were Bolivar's peers, except in so far as his integrating vision made them accept him. Bolivar was no commander secure in a constituted State or with the vested doctrine of a Church. His leadership depended on leaders who, by temperament and often by belief, challenged it; it must be proved, again and again. The pages of the *Correo del Orinoco* reveal how remote he was, despite his "dictatorial powers," from the privileges of a dictator. His name was seldom printed, and always as General Bolivar, without emphasis or adulation.

Another reality forced him to take his volcanic generals as they came. In the logistics of fighting through the vast lands of South America, space was more essential than man-power.

The armies were small; the plains, jungles and mountains were almost empty of inhabitants and could not support large divisions. Therefore, every man's conduct counted; there was no pattern of mass psychology, the dependable common base of modern armies; the direction of the motley "lovers of freedom" — peasants, freed slaves, adventurers, foreigners, with scant notion of state or country — was geared immediately to the *personal* leaders. They were masters, not only of the men, literally *theirs*, but of the land they occupied — the overwhelming space of the great rivers, the mountains, the ferocious plains and jungles. Space was a factor in every fight. When Páez maneuvered his men, their command of the plains was a weapon of surprise in attack, of safety in retreat. When Bermúdez or Anzoátegui or Bolívar campaigned in the valleys, their knowledge of terrain was like the possession of many forts. The more cultured soldiers, as Bolívar and Mariño, had studied the campaigns of France, Prussia, England and Spain; but the unlettered like Páez often instinctively knew best. If Páez may be called a primitive captain (a very great one), Bolívar and San Martín (and the best Spanish generals — Morillo in Venezuela, Canterac in Peru) were neo-primitives. In 1819, the tacticians of the new method were still learning; the greatest of them all (Sucre) had not yet emerged.

When Bolívar first met Antonio José de Sucre (like Bolívar's, his family included descendants of Francisco Infante, conquistador of Caracas), the twenty-three-year-old patrician from Cumaná was already a seasoned soldier. His education had been an engineer's, but he knew the Encyclopedists and *Le Contrat Social* of Rousseau. Aged fifteen, in 1810, when Cumaná rose immediately after Caracas, he joined the revolution and fought under Miranda.

After the collapse of the first republic, he returned to the east coast from exile with Mariño, Piar and Bermúdez, and took part in the remarkable campaign of Oriente in which five hundred patriots routed eight thousand royalists. Three of his brothers were murdered by the men of Boves; his sister, maddened by grief, hurled herself to death through a window.

He suffered shipwreck, floating to safety on a spar after days in shark-infested waters. Through the terror, he survived, serene and without hate. When Mariño muddled the war with insubordination, he and Urdaneta followed Bolivar to Guayana. Bolivar first met him in Angostura, and showed his immediate confidence by sending him to Mariño, to prevail on his old chief to behave. In 1817, Sucre was a colonel; in 1819, at twenty-four, he was a brigadier general, the youngest in the army.

Sucre revered Bolivar. Soon, Bolivar would say to O'Leary: "He is one of the best officers in the army; he unites the professional knowledge of Soublette, the good character of Briceño [his Secretary and Minister of War], the intellect of Santander, the dynamism of Salom. Strangely, no one knows or suspects his aptitudes. I am resolved to bring them into the light; some day, I am sure Sucre will rival me." As he grew, Sucre would inspire in Bolivar a love warmer, deeper, more complex, than Bolivar felt for any other human being. But now as Sucre went along into New Granada, this pre-eminence was still unseen. The man Bolivar most relied on was Santander.

Casanare, the one part of New Granada not reconquered by Spain, had been conquered by no one. Immense savannahs swallowed the miserable hamlets of fishermen, hunters, cowmen. Petty caudillos fought among themselves; the savage Yaruro Indians dealt bloody raids, burning the homes and the grass in the dry season, making off with the half-wild horses and cattle. Santander organized this chaos. He recruited and trained a little army, which he spaced at the several openings of the Andes against the royalists' descent. He established depots for the livestock and routes for their export to the rich Granadan valleys. When the Spanish General Barreiro came down through the easiest of the passes, Santander threw him back. Thanks to Santander, Bolivar had a springboard for his leap across the Andes.

On June 5 and 6 (after the day with Páez in Guasqualito), the army — the infantry, artillery and supplies in leather boats, the cavalry on their horses — swam the swollen Arauca

into Casanare. These savannahs in the four dry months are pleasantly cool. The green grass grows high; innumerable little rivers teem with fish along with the crocodile, the blood-thirsty *caribe*, the amphibious capybara, snouted like a gopher and with a body huge as a bear's. The *matas de monte*, oases of trees, give shade to singing birds and antelopes. Mosquitoes and zancudos vanish. Now, in the winter of rain, grey skies smothered the overheated land, the rivers rose to lakes that devoured half the world, and the oppressive air throbbed with vicious insects. The clothes and shoes of the men rotted and decomposed; the hooves of the horses sickened; hundreds of men and horses lay down in the mud forever. No compass could avoid the lakes and swamps beneath the treacherous grass, where a man's body could be sucked to bottomless death; only the imponderable sense of the guides, the *baquianos*, kept the army alive. The sole food was jerked beef, unsalted and mouldy. The men took their rest in mire among the swarming of mosquitoes. No fire or smudge could be kept lighted; for twelve hours, after the day's grey drench, the world turned black and the pierce of the ferocious gnats sent fire into the blood. If the hundred days up the Orinoco and Apure had been purgatory, this was hell.

On the western edge of the plain where it rises sudden into the Cordillera, stood Tame, Santander's headquarters, a hundred feet above the waters on a flat tableland; and its poor huts of 'dobe and thatch seemed paradise to the survivors. Here Santander and Bolivar met to study the passage of the Andes.

Bolivar, thirty-six, was the oldest of the leaders: Soublette, the slow, judicious chief of staff, was twenty-nine; Anzoátegui was thirty; Santander was twenty-eight. He stood three inches taller than Bolivar; he was blond, light-skinned, corpulent, carelessly dressed, but the resolute gravity of his expression made a mask of the brown eyes, the straight nose, the narrow intense forehead, the thin firm lips, which barred access to his thoughts. Bolivar recalled the conflict between them six years before, in another invasion of the Andes. This man was able,

he knew; and completely free, it seemed, of the federalism he had once shared with Castillo. For months he had sent Bolivar in Angostura meticulous daily reports on Casanare and on the movements of the enemy across the mountains.

They conferred in a mud hut with the skeletons of cows for stools, and on the table a tallow candle to light their maps. Santander completely approved the project of the Andes. There were three possible passes over the Cordillera into New Granada: he pointed them out. There was a fourth, by way of Paya and Pisba: this was the rockiest, the coldest, the most dangerous. Almost no one traveled it; only the Indians knew it. Bolivar chose it: surprise was crucial, when they climbed to meet the well-trained troops of General Barreiro; and Santander with his Granadans would lead the "impossible" assault upon New Granada.

Four days Bolivar's men (a scattering of wives were with them) took their rest; dried, patched, replenished their ragged rotted clothes; enjoyed the rice, the yucca, the bananas, and the delicious coffee grown in the neighboring fields. Then with Santander's troops they flanked the Cordillera.

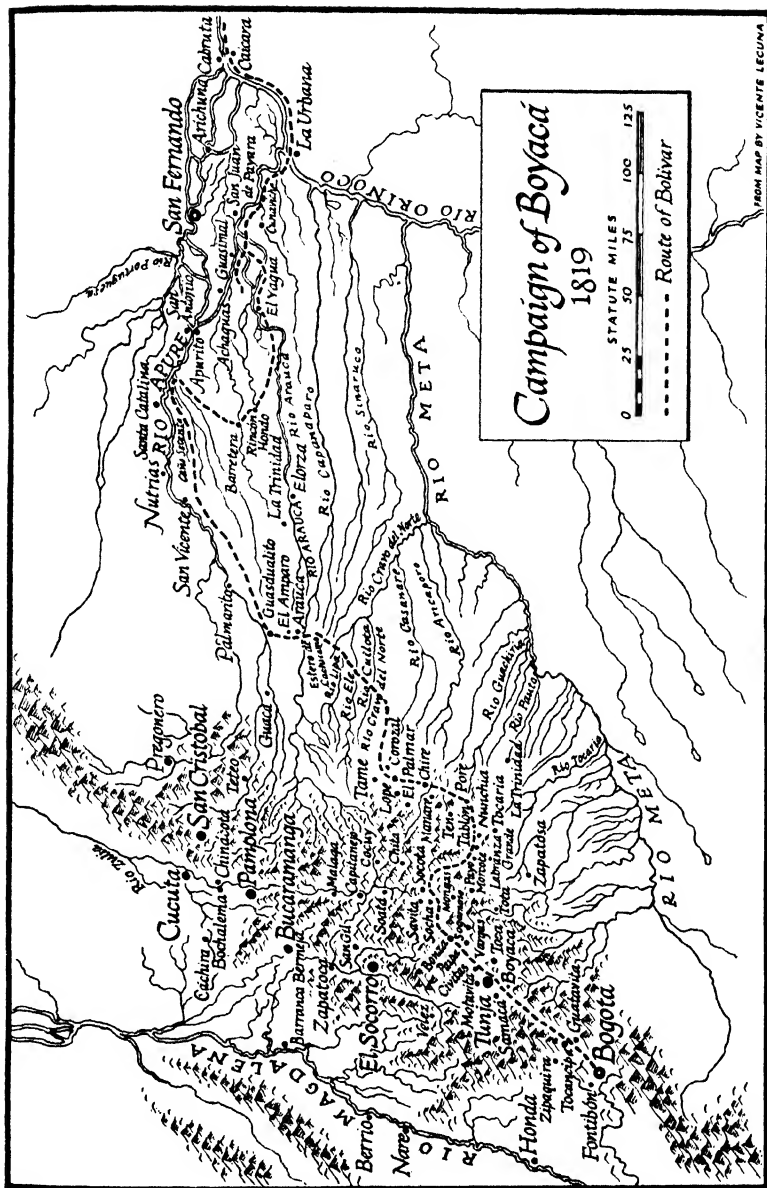
They forded many streams, swift and cold now that they poured from the immediate mountains. In the dry season, they might have been uplifted by the heights cascading overhead in verdant semicircles, but all they saw was the firmament of rain, rent by the lightning that revealed an earth, acid-green, rearing and rolling thunderous upon them. So fierce were these claps of coruscation that men toughened to battle-fire quailed, and horses trained to musket and lance-clash rose on their hind legs neighing. At each village, victims of malaria remained behind in hospitals improvised from thatch-roofed huts. Ten days brought the vanguard to Nunchea, where Bolivar waited to give final instructions for the assault of the great Pisba wall behind which were the unsuspecting Spaniards.

The earth, now precipitously rising, was mire, mined by knife-sharp rock beneath the dirge of the rain forest. The horses stumbled and cut their knees. Mountain torrents flung past, the heavy trees bore down, the whole earth bore down

against their rising. The air grew colder, piercing the bodies long inured to heat; the rain was now a solid mass grinding the mud and the stone, the trees and the men's bodies, into a single substance. They struggled toward Pisba. The trees shrank and took dwarf monster shapes; at nine thousand seven hundred feet, they vanished. Swamp and mournful tarn: each so desolate it must be the last, until it merged into another higher. Ghost-grey shrubs, the stubborn frailones: ascetic, emaciate elf-monks, huddled in the lee of rocks: at the men's heads, cloud-battalions of rain, racing horizontal with great clamor, sieving their clothes and their flesh. The Pisba world was a moon, pale and naked, under the drum of a vast wind. Men gasped for breath and lay on this moon-earth, and closed their eyes forever. Horses collapsed, fell on their backs, their legs hysterical with death. Several women gave birth, the men crowding to lend their poor warmth. The day was an uncanny twilight, the air more water than air, more mineral than water; each mountain summit seemed a hill, and as the army crawled to it, another was beyond it. Men turned and tried to look back whence they had come; all they saw was the clouds and the roaring hollow silence. They tried to peer forward; in a lesion of the clouds below them they glimpsed a fugue of mountains striated with thin silvery streams which, they were sure, must flow toward the Magdalena: proof they were over the Great Divide! But these were still tributaries of the Apure.

When at last the vanguard began moving down from Pisba, not a horse lived, and the mud of the tarns was littered with abandoned guns and crates. But a dry air came up, and they saw far below the brown furzed heights and verdant valley of the Sogamoso: a sunny vision caught to the eye, as by a telescope, through a crack in the vast night. At Las Quebradas, only eleven thousand feet above the sea, the survivors shouted with joy as if they had already won their battle.

They were now close to the enemy, and their peril was greater; when he learned of them, his fresh cavalry could cut them to pieces as they lay, a wounded serpent along the steep decline. Their horses were dead, their artillery and many of



their guns were still in the swamp of the clouds; they were too spent to fire or even to dodge a cutlass. Bolivar recognized the moment of peril as the instant to attack. Even a day on the defensive, once the Spaniard knew of them, would be fatal. But if they struck a first mysterious blow, the enemy, uncertain of their strength, would stop to assemble his own; that pause could save them!

The ascent of Pisba, "the impossible pass," had been a triumph over space. But to make the victory real, man must be conquered. And man involved the tragic dimension: Time! Time to rest and recreate the patriot army; time to find fresh horses, time to rescue the guns and munitions left behind and overhead on Pisba, time to recruit new men from these lush valleys . . . yet not too much time, lest the greater force of Viceroy Sámano in Bogotá have time to reinforce Barreiro.

Bolivar addressed the exhausted vanguard, the divisions of Santander and Anzoátegui. To retreat, he told them, meant death on Pisba, after they had conquered it. The one hope for life was to face death by going forward. A cavalry squadron of Barreiro advanced over the river Gameza; the independents attacked; the royalists recrossed the stream and the patriots pursued, charging with bayonets. The astounded enemy, sure a whole army stood behind the charge, retreated to their main lines. The patriots also withdrew, but their ruse had succeeded: they had won a respite!

They found themselves in a land bright with food, sun, men and horses. The villagers received them with joy. Hospitals were set up; herds of beef were driven in and slaughtered; medicines soothed the sick and grain made savory fresh bread — the first since Angostura! The pause was good . . . good as the glow of fire in a freezing night. But only a beginning. Bolivar needed Tunja, the city at the center of supplies and men; and Barreiro held the road to it.

A few miles south of Paipa, between Tunja and the place where the patriots slowly straggled down from Pisba, this road narrowed between a steep hill on the left (if one faced Tunja) and a broad swamp, the *Pántano de Vargas*. Barreiro's army,

now aware, occupied the hill with parapets and trenches, commanding the road and the swamp. Couriers were racing the hundred miles to Bogotá to rush back Spanish reinforcements. Now, Bolivar must destroy Time. Hurriedly he constructed forty rafts, and ferried half his army, with the British Legion, the last to transcend Pisba, across the Sogamoso. This gave him a flank approach to the fortified hill, while the other half of his men under Santander attacked it straight from the road. They got halfway up, and were driven back. Bolivar with the British in the van, led by the Irishman James Rooke, charged from the flank, and they too were repulsed. Both divisions re-formed and went up again; and were beaten down toward the fatal swamp. Then Bolivar called, above the fire, to Rondón, the Negro officer in command of the reserve Apure cavalry: "*Colonel, save the country!*" The plainsmen charged; the royalists were swept and scattered.

The Spaniards left five hundred dead on the hill: the road to Tunja was open. Among the wounded of the patriot army were Captain O'Leary and Colonel Rooke. Gangrene attacked Rooke's arm, and he watched with open eyes while the surgeon cut it off. Then, with his remaining hand, he brandished it in the air. "Look," he said, "What an arm! It has fought well for my fatherland." "Where is your fatherland?" asked the surgeon. The Irishman replied: "Where I am buried." They buried him in Tunja.

More important even than the possession of the city was the amaze of the royalists, who could not yet believe the *presence* of Bolivar. Barreiro decided to fall back on Bogotá before he again gave battle.

Bolivar was far from easy. Barreiro had suffered a psychological defeat, whose depth Bolivar could not count on. The main body of royalists in New Granada was intact. And what of Morillo in Venezuela? In Guasqualito, Bolivar had labored to explain to Páez the necessity of the feint at Cúcuta to draw off Morillo and Sámano. Páez had demurred: "It's like grasping at the sky with your hand," but Bolivar had been firm. Now, in Tunja, he learned that Páez had disobeyed again. In-

stead of moving northwest toward Cúcuta, he had gone east toward Achaguas and San Fernando . . . had remained in his beloved "little country"! Bolivar wrote him an angry letter. "You are responsible for the fate of the Republic in failing to occupy the valley of Cúcuta." Had the other Generals to the east . . . Mariño, Bermúdez, Arismendi, Urdaneta . . . done better? And how fared Angostura?

B O Y A C Á

MEANWHILE, he went to work in Tunja. He declared martial law for the province; he called men from fifteen to forty to military service; horses, gold and food were ruthlessly requisitioned; scouts were sent to watch Barreiro.

Tunja, ancient capital of the Chibcha nation, lies in the trough of a plain that rolls like a seismic sea. The outer walls of its churches and convents are forbidding (although within, the carved cedar and gold and the chromatic sculptures reveal a muscular fantasy); the private houses, rigidly symmetric, with windows high on the first floor, low on the second, give formal spaciousness to the narrow streets. The central square is immense and barren. It is a cold, high city (higher, colder, greyer than Bogotá). The Indians in grey ponchos or *ruanas*, their arms hidden, their faces in the shadow of black hats, stand like little pyramids in the frosty, perennial twilight, sepulchres of feeling. Beyond the city, the plain swells into hills (thirteen thousand feet above the sea) and the vegetation, except for a rare *fica* or maguey, loses all tropic form; trees and shrubs are like New England's birch, alder, poplar and locust in a bleak spring.

From Tunja, the plateau falls south toward Bogotá, as the "hills" rise and the streams rush into rivers that become the Sogamoso and the Magdalena. The hills now are mountain-mammoths locked together: hairy packs of them, writhing, wrestling. Their perpendicular flanks are rugose with grass; their backs and trunks are stone cutting the sky. At their feet,

the thin streams evade, seeking outlets from the mountains. The banks are usually too thin for verdure, but when they broaden and grow green, there is a village. Sometimes, the village is perched halfway up the perpendicular flank. It is always built in accord with Spain's theocratic law: streets of stone and serrate tile roofs climbing to the crown which is the plaza and the church. In the lower fields, the soil is rich for coffee and tobacco.



It was two weeks before scouts brought breathless news to Bolivar. Several roads led from the north toward Bogotá; the best of these, through Tunja, was of course not open to the royalists; on August 7, Bolivar learned that Barreiro with three thousand veterans was taking the second road, bound for the capital to join the Viceroy's forces. This second road converged on the first (which led from Tunja) ten miles south of that city, at a stone bridge across the little river Boyacá.

At once the independent army was assembled in the great square of Tunja: only two thousand survivors of the great march, with another thousand from the recent levies. They raced down the ten-mile road to Boyacá.

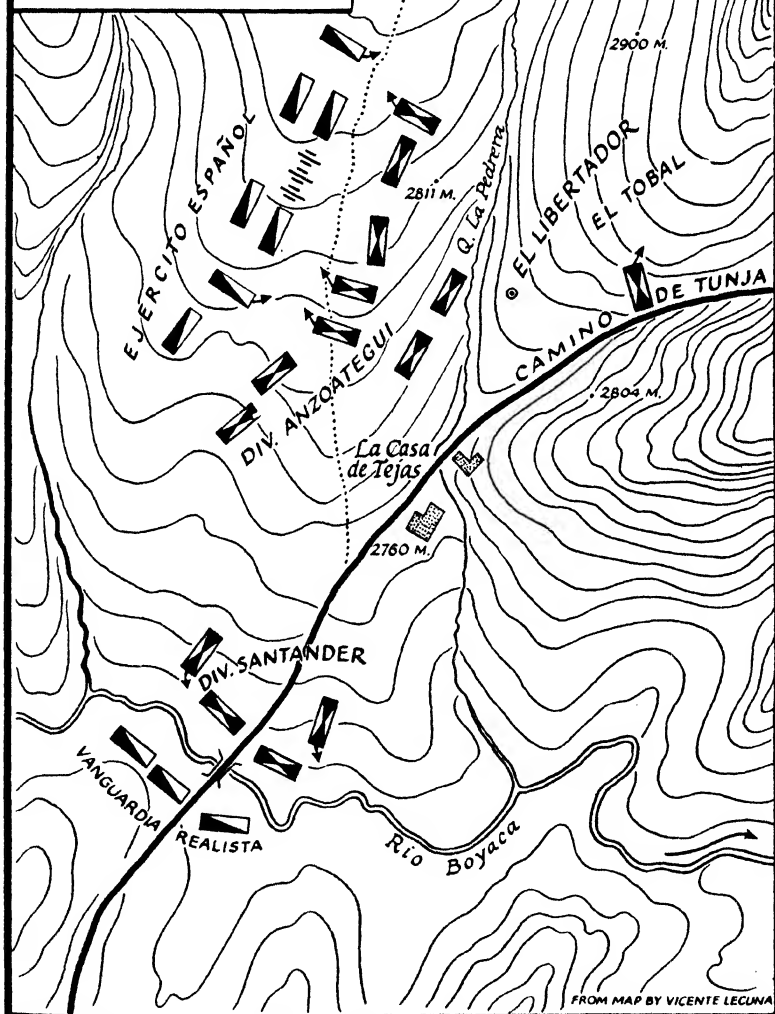
Barreiro was there. It was past noon, and his men had stopped at the north side of the river to eat. This was a field, lower than Tunja and more fertile, with shrubs and a copse of trees; beyond the bridge a hill rose steeply; the site resembled a crude bowl with the stream a sharp crack through the middle.

On the rim of the bowl eastward the Spaniards saw some cavalry which Barreiro mistook for a party of Bolivar's scouts and sent a vanguard to destroy. As the vanguard crossed the bridge, the patriots swept in on Barreiro's main army. He maneuvered to the right for high ground, but the men of Anzoátegui were too quick and split the Spanish force in two, while the vanguard was caught south of the stream. It tried to cross back over the bridge, but the fire of Santander's men pinned it down. Then the British division wheeled from Anzoátegui's men, and the royalists were surrounded, with the swollen river at their backs. Santander wiped out the vanguard, crossed the bridge; the battle of Boyacá was over.

Battle of Boyacá

Patriots 
Spanish 

0 100 200 300 400
YARDS



So swift was the action, instinctive as the tussle of two men hurling their bodies at one another, that a good part of the republican reserves: the Tunja recruits and even a number of the Venezuelan and British veterans, had no chance to fight. The patriot loss was small, although probably larger than the official count of thirteen dead and fifty-three wounded. Five hundred royalists lay dead on the field, sixteen hundred were wounded, the rest — including Barreiro and thirty-nine officers — surrendered. Among these, next morning, Bolivar recognized Vinoni, the Venezuelan officer who had betrayed the fort at Puerto Cabello; he was shot at once. Sucre was promoted on the field to Chief of Staff.

When the news reached the Viceroy in Bogotá, he fled for Cartagena, leaving behind his supplies and a treasure of gold which the republicans, in order to boost their credit, exaggerated to five hundred thousand pesos. Anzoátegui pursued the Spaniard north, but could not catch him. On August 10, three days after the battle, six months since his start from Angostura a thousand miles away, Bolivar entered the capital of New Granada. He had left it in January, 1815, promising to return. Meantime, Morillo and Sámano had crushed the clerical city into a concentration camp, the chief republicans had been murdered. The Bogateños welcomed Bolivar as warmly as their temperament permitted. They were ready for revenge: they were quite sure they were ready for freedom.

BOGOTÁ TO ANGOSTURA

FORTY DAYS, Bolivar remained in Bogotá. He proposed an exchange of prisoners to the Viceroy, safe in Cartagena: and received no answer. He hurried one hundred and seventy thousand gold pesos to impoverished Angostura. He named Santander provisional Vice-President of Cundinamarca, an office like that of Zea (also a Granadan) in Venezuela. He called for elections of a Congress. On September 20, he began his long journey back, a voyage through floral arches, singing maids,

banquets at every town — and long orations, which tried the hero's patience more than the Andean campaign. To cut the speeches short, he devised methods which jarred the town fathers' feelings. Bolivar's humor was grim; he had begun to get news of Venezuela.

Páez, he already knew, had disobeyed and remained home. The faithful Urdaneta, as he was confident, had succeeded in holding Morillo close to his base in Caracas; Torres had recaptured San Fernando. But Bermúdez, Mariño, Arismendi, too dissident among themselves to collaborate against the enemy, had stuck to their old pattern. Before he left Angostura, Bolivar had finally rejected Mr. Irvine's demands for redress against the loss of the *Tiger* and the *Liberty*. Mr. Irvine had gone home, where he called Bolivar "a charlatan general, a mountebank politician." In July, Lieutenant Perry sailed up the Orinoco, repeated his country's demand, and Vice-President Zea had given in. The United States of 1819 had fewer inhabitants than Mexico, immeasurably less wealth and men than the Hispanic lands. To Bolivar, Zea's capitulation to the future Commodore was a humiliating act of weakness.

Perhaps it reconciled Bolivar to what had happened to Zea. Arismendi, master of Margarita, so deliberately flouted national orders that the austere Urdaneta ordered his arrest and brought him to the capital to stand trial. Mariño, a member of the Congress, meanwhile devoted his time not to the war but to a cabal against Zea. With his followers, he came armed to the sessions, and filibustered against the Vice-President. In Bolivar's absence, Mariño said, the country needed a soldier at the helm. Zea, fearing civil strife, resigned; and Arismendi was removed from jail and elected Vice-President of the republic. His first act was to appoint Mariño Commander-in-chief of the Venezuelan army. This took place on September 14; for months there had been no word of Bolivar; now, on the 17th came the electric news of the victory at Boyacá.

On the night of December 11, the city learned that Bolivar was approaching. At ten next morning, when his boat warped, the church bells pealed, and flowers paved the streets. Without

comment, Bolivar received the welcome of the new Vice President Arismendi. Zea still presided in the Congress.

Bolivar looked over the scene: the insubordinate generals, the exhausted treasury, the fatal weakness of the civil government shaken by the rattle of Mariño's sword. And bad news came from Bogotá. Santander had taken Barreiro and the thirty-eight captive officers from prison to the public square and in full view of the people, hungry for revenge, had had them shot. The total scene was dark, and Bolivar responded with his habitual speed. He summoned Zea to his house above the Orinoco, and told him the time had come to proclaim Colombia, the new republic whose lands would extend from Panama to Peru. Zea was dubious: would it not be more legal to await the Granadan Congress and let it vote on the union? No, was Bolivar's answer. And six days after his return, the Congress (with a bare quorum of eighteen, no time to summon the others) dissolved the Republic of Venezuela and created the Republic of Colombia. It had three divisions: Venezuela, Cundinamarca (New Granada south to the old Captaincy General of Quito) and Quito. The capital of Venezuela was Caracas (still in Spanish hands); the capital of Cundinamarca was Bogotá; the capital of Quito was the city of Quito (still held by the Spaniards); the national capital would be a new city toward the center of the realm (perhaps its name would be Bolivar). A constituent congress of Colombia was called for January 1821, in the Villa del Rosario de Cúcuta, on the border between Venezuela and New Granada (the city was still in Spanish hands). This Congress would draft the national constitution. Meanwhile, the Congress of Angostura held provisional elections. Bolivar was unanimously chosen President of Colombia; Zea became Vice-President of Colombia (with fourteen votes); Juan Germán Roscío was elected Vice-President of Venezuela; Santander got the same office for Cundinamarca; the Vice-President of Quito would be chosen, when that province was free.

V I I

Vice-President Santander

"Equality before the law is indispensable where there is physical inequality, in order somewhat to correct the injustice of nature."

THE MASTER POLITICIAN

THE REALM of independence had expanded. After Boyacá, swiftly west, south and north, the enemy was cleared from New Granada's richest provinces: Choco, where Negroes worked the mines; Cauca, the middle valley, not too high, not too low, "the Eden of America," according to Humboldt; Antioquia, between the central and western Cordilleras, where thrifty Basques and families who boasted descent from Spain's exiled Jews owned progressive industries and grew the continent's best coffee. Venezuela's Oriente was free, with Margarita and vast Guayana and Apure teeming with wild cattle. North of Peru (soon to be invaded from Chile by San Martín with Admiral Lord Cochrane's fleet), Spain still held three major foci: in Quito, General Aymerich with five thousand seasoned troops possessed all of what is now Ecuador north to royalist Pasto; Sámano in Cartagena with five thousand veterans had Panama, Santa Marta and the lower Magdalena; Morillo's army of fifteen thousand held Caracas, Valencia and the sea-ports. The foe walled the free heart of Venezuela, and might stifle it to death; with Cuba and Puerto Rico he commanded the sea and could bring fresh troops from Spain. The United States and Britain carried on more trade with the King's men

than with the needy patriots: one cause of the delay in recognizing the Republic.

Bríón performed wonders to bring in arms, medicines, clothes, through the Orinoco; but the patriot soldiers were half-naked, half-starved, racked with disease, and constantly deserting. The arrival of a thousand muskets meant more in morale than a battle: a grim truth which Bolivar respected when he sent Sucre from the scene of war to the Antilles to buy guns. Sucre was hurt; was he no better than a purchasing agent? With paternal patience, Bolivar answered: if Sucre did not find the guns, he, Bolivar, would have to go for them. Sucre came back with guns, fished from the Caribbean troubled waters. Their price was always exorbitant, and always a percentage would not shoot.

There were other troubles. Malaria devastated the lowland garrisons, but the land's dearth and the perpendicular changes of climate made the movement of troops lethal; and even worse was idleness which faced the men with their own misery. The word desertion tolls in Bolivar's letters. "Our army," he wrote, "is a sack with a hole at the bottom."

The foreign legions, now the honeymoon of the first campaign was over, had become a menace; and Bolivar regretted that he had abandoned his earliest instinct not to use them in larger units than three hundred. Some of the Europeans were worth regiments: for instance, Rooke and Sandes of Britain, the Frenchmen Serviez and Bruix, the Poles Sisakowski and Flegel, the Swede Adlercreutz, the Italian Codazzi, the Hanoverian Uslar. Aides-de-camp like O'Leary and Fergusson became protagonists. But there were soldiers of fortune, bravos, discards of the slump in Europe after the Napoleonic wars: in the relaxation of success, they got drunk, they insulted the Negroes, pardos and mestizos, they complained of the food and clamored for wages and promotions. In Rio Hacha, near Santa Marta, an Irish regiment shot its officers and sailed for Jamaica. The British mutinied in Margarita and Barcelona. In Achaguas of the Apure plains five hundred Englishmen rebelled and Páez felt himself forced to cut off the heads of the leaders.

Bolívar banned more recruits from foreign countries; and Britain countered by passing a law against enlistments.

On the credit page, there was more. After Boyacá, republican prestige both at home and abroad mounted swiftly. Coro, stubborn royalist stronghold, threw out its Spanish garrison, and the Indian chief, Juan de los Reyes Vargas, acknowledged the Republic. The people were learning they were Americans: this, Bolívar's greatest contribution. Liberal Spanish officers, disgusted with their reactionary king, offered their swords to Bolívar. A sizable campaign for recognition sprang up in the United States. Henry Clay spoke from the Senate; Brackenridge, a government agent back from Chile and Buenos Aires, published a convincing "Letter to James Monroe . . . Upon the Present State of South America." Even Baptis Irvine, home from Angostura, repented and praised the new republic. De-Witt Clinton, Thurlow Weed, Stephen Gerard, John Jacob Astor, were among the men who spoke up. *Outline of the Revolution in Spanish America*, a book by Manuel Palacio Fajardo (who had purified the style of Bolívar's Angostura speech), was translated into English and had a cordial press.

On January 1, 1820, an army of ten thousand Spanish veterans of the wars with France, ready in Cadiz to sail against Bolívar, refused to fight Americans, raised the banner of *Constitución y Libertad* which swept the country, and forced Fernando VII to acknowledge the 1812 Constitution he had torn up. When news of the revolt reached Bolívar, he danced with joy. "Our cause has been decided!" he wrote to his friend William White in London. A new wave of liberalism was rising in Europe (to reach its crest in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848), and with his usual clairvoyance Bolívar saw it. "France," he wrote, "—I mean the Bourbons, must have trembled at the revolt in Spain. . . . I say the same for England which has even better reasons for fearing revolution in Europe and for desiring it in America. The first will give her an infinite headache, the second will give her infinite wealth. The United States, following its code of arithmetical values, will take advantage [of the revolution] by swallowing the Floridas

and cultivating our commerce and friendship. It's a true conspiracy of Spain, Europe and America against Fernando. He deserves it! It's no longer a glory to take part in so formidable a league against an imbecile tyrant. Always his enemy, I look with contempt now on fighting a ruined and moribund opponent." The war was far from over; but Bolivar's eyes were already beyond it. Practically by *fiat*, he had created Colombia. (On February 27, 1820, the Bogotá Assembly confirmed its fundamental law passed in Angostura in December, and approved the call for the first Colombian Congress in Cúcuta, in January, 1821). Now Bolivar's gaze was beyond Colombia . . . was upon a "Federation of the Andes," from Panama to Chile. Peru was passive (in his Jamaica letter, he had analyzed the causes); Venezuela was exhausted by the bloody decade: Bolivar needed an army of thirty thousand to converge with San Martín on Peru. He looked to New Granada. New Granada had the food, the men, the potential wealth. Who to realize and to mobilize them? Bolivar looked to Santander.

Although New Granada had risen against the King nearly as soon as Caracas (and at once split in civil war), it had suffered immeasurably less than Venezuela. Its population, twice Venezuela's, had not been destroyed; its far greater resources had been neglected but not razed. Perhaps the people were more remote from the Jungle (their Magdalena, compared to the feral Orinoco, was a mere huge mountain freshet); perhaps, like their valleys, they were more suave. But the three titan Cordilleras splitting the land? Bolivar looked to Santander, his key to the comprehension and control of divided New Granada.

What a self-possessed young man Santander was! what a chaos Bolivar had been, when *he* was thirty! He recalled their talks in the mud hut at Tame. Santander had proved by logic, history, law, historical precedent, logical history, the rightness of Bolivar's plan to crawl over the Andes and strike the Spaniard in the belly. Even before Bolivar left Bogotá he had watched Santander establish himself as political boss. The quiet, courtly houses about the Cathedral square added up to

Santander. For his great part in the campaign, Bolívar had given him one of these mansions, and a rich estancia near the city. How Santander's cold eyes had lighted! The man loved money; so much the better, since Colombia desperately needed money; and who could make it, if not Santander? During the first month, despite his administrative duties, Santander had found time to write an account of the Boyacá campaign, published in the *Gaceta* and signed "A Granadan." Anonymity might have tempted the young man to insinuate his own heroic part in the campaign, but Santander had barely mentioned his own name. Instead, he attacked his old heresy of federalism (of the days of his friendship with Castillo): "It must be confessed: our revolution needs a strong action *controlled by a single impulse*. . . . The Republic is a battlefield, where no voice must be heard but the Commander's, except when he consults his captains." Santander was arguing for the free creative hand of Bolívar. And how to the point: "Another error has been common in our revolution: *we have confused freedom and independence*."

On his way back to Angostura, Bolívar had learned of the execution of General Barreiro and his officers.

Santa Fe de Bogotá,
October 17, 1819

Exmo. Señor Presidente del Estado,

I have the honor to advise Your Excellency that on the 11th of the current month I publicly executed the thirty-nine captured officers of the King's army. My humanitarian feelings and those of Your Excellency fought against this providential act; but the health of the fatherland required it; I dared heed no generous impulse.

Shortly after you left this capital, the prisoners, encouraged by our chivalrous treatment, began to send out subversive messages that confused the patriots and veered public opinion back toward the King. They even promised protection to officers of the Republic who guarded them, and tried to seduce the soldiers in the prison and to obtain women's clothes in order to escape. The city took alarm, the people cried out, the government could not function securely, fearing on the one hand a disaffected people and on the other that our small garrison would be won over. As I meditated these powerful reasons for what I did, I saw at the same time in these officers

the assassins and hangmen of our peaceful compatriots, the ravagers of our precious land, the felons of the crime that has been committed upon New Granada. These captive officers had garroted even plain soldiers, their prisoners of war, and would have vented this ferocity on Your Excellency, on our comrades and on me, if we had lost at Boyacá. I foresaw that Sámano would not accept your offer of exchange of prisoners of war, since the Spanish generals have declared they will not negotiate with "insurgents" and since Sámano has given express orders to the government of the Isthmus of Panama to shoot all foreign prisoners in Portobello. . . .

In these circumstances, Exmo. Señor, I could not vouch for the security of these provinces, if I preserved the power of these officers to work against it; and after the competent inquiry which I ordered, I decreed the executions. They were witnessed by an enormous public, the officers, the troops, the populace: all of whom clearly expressed their satisfaction and content at this just measure. Scarcely a citizen has failed to come to the Palace to demonstrate his pleasure, and Your Excellency cannot imagine the notable improvement of the public spirit since the 11th. . . .

SANTANDER

The event shocked Bolivar. He knew Santander had with him in Bogotá a brigade of artillery, a squadron of cavalry, the not inconsiderable militia — and the people's need, surely deeper than their immediate lust for revenge, to close at last the bloody decade of reprisals. He knew Santander had *willed* these executions; and indeed he had witnessed them. With his staff he paraded to the Cathedral plaza, where the crowd waited his arrival; he ceremoniously stepped from a balcony above the square and gave the signal — much like a popular conductor walking late from the wings to the seated orchestra and lifting his baton. The royalist officers (six of the thirty-nine were Venezuelans, five were Granadans, one was from Quito — and among the Spaniards was the army apothecary) were made to kneel; and were shot ignominiously in the back. A cruel performance.

When Bolivar reached Pamplona, close to the frontier of Venezuela, he replied to Santander:

. . . With regret I learned of the perfidy of our prisoners of war, which obliged you to have them shot, while there was pending a

negotiation of exchange which would have done such honor to the Republic and won the applause of foreign nations for an act of humanity between belligerents. Our enemies will not believe, or at least will pretend not to believe, that severity was forced on us. They will see, not an act of justice, but reprisal and gratuitous revenge. Be that as it may, I thank Your Excellency for the zealous speed with which you tried to save the Republic, through this unfortunate measure. Doubtless, our reputation will suffer; but in recompense, the approval of our people and the new enthusiasm this will inspire, must console us. . . .

These stilted words reveal the depths of Bolivar's doubt. If this was "the man of laws," the devout Catholic, and if Santander was New Granada, how could Bolivar understand and win this center and most powerful part of his new nation?

Bolivar's letters to Santander in the immediate months after Boyacá become warm, playful, confiding, frequently ambivalent in praise and sly rebuke, almost forcedly spontaneous (the contradiction fits them). In a wide gamut from gaiety to self-confession, he woos the man by giving himself. "Soon, very soon, we will meet . . . we will embrace, and although neither of us is soft, we will feel the deepest pleasure." Santander's replies are the invariable monotone of a cold, correct report; their sole personal note is the wish to resign: the thanklessness and burden of the task are too much for Bolivar's humble servant. Bolivar chides, praises, jests — with barbs.

. . . You're joking! it's not so bad, the Vice-Presidency with twenty-thousand pesos, and no danger of losing a battle, of dying in it, of being taken prisoner, of being taken for a fool or a coward, the fate of many a general. You seem to forget your function, or you're not being frank as I've always believed you and wanted you. I don't know how to thank you for all you are doing and saying for me. If, as you say, I have overwhelmed you with favors, you overwhelm me with your gratitude; and which is preferable: an act of power or an act of virtue? Is not this latter better? Thus, you win over me. . . .

He thanks Santander for his approval, and compares himself with Pompey: ". . . having the same weakness of wishing to be applauded for my operations." His plans change many times

in the first half of 1820; from Santander he hides no uncertainty, no inconsistency, no doubt; he seems to bare his weakness as if pleading. For what? For *the man*, the bad with the good. He needs — and does not have him!

At times, like a woman, Bolivar is self-revealing, self-disarming, in order to be captured:

Villa del Rosario (Cúcuta); 10 April 1820

to His Excellency General Francisco de Paula Santander.

Dear General,

Yesterday came the mail from Venezuela, late, very late, brought by the heavy Colonel Montesdeoco. It has filled me with disappointments, whereupon I fill myself with hopes. The guns have not arrived, but I hope (*pero espero*) they will arrive from somewhere. Nothing has been accomplished in England, but I hope (*pero espero*) for something in our favor. The Americans are neutral, but I hope (*pero espero*). . . . The Irish expedition is not ready, but I hope (*pero espero*) it soon will be. The infantry of Páez is extremely small, but I hope (*pero espero*) it will grow larger, when the sick list recovers — unless they all die. I don't know what to do in our state of defenselessness, and with winter coming on, but I hope (*pero espero*) in spite of all to do something; I know not yet what. I ask your advice; perhaps it will come in time. Here is the place to tell me what you will, with utmost candor; for my uncertainty keeps me awake nights.

I have great fears of a calamity in our diplomatic efforts. I have great fears of ruining Cundinamarca [New Granada] with a prolonged defensive and the cost of a great army. I have great fears of hunger, epidemic, poverty, the boredom of the people, the demoralization of the idle troops.

. . . This is the letter of *los peros*.

Your affectionate friend,
BOLIVAR

The play on words is triple: *pero* sounds not only for *but* and *hope* (*espero*) but also for *dog* (*perro*). "This is the letter," Bolivar is saying, "of one who between doubts and hopes is going to the dogs. "But," the wit concludes, "don't believe a word of *that*."

"Departing from New Granada, I hope confidently you will

justify what I say to the people: 'I do not leave you; in Santander, I leave you another Bolivar!' "

In an Anglo-Saxon, this remark would be bad taste. In the more emphatic, confessional culture of Bolivar's race, it is merely an excess of candor. Bolivar sincerely meant it; he had accepted Santander's rôle so deeply within his own on the historic stage, that he was like an actor whispering personal asides to his fellow, while they were both before the footlights. It would be several years before Bolivar understood the effect of his approaches on the man he desperately willed to make his *alter ego*. What he ignored was Santander's utter want of his own dimension of detachment. Bolivar's ego, immense surely, was always within a greater embracing whole, which assuaged and tempered it, purifying it of instinctual reactions. This dominant whole was so manifest to Bolivar, he could not dream that his associate lacked it. Santander's ego was uncovered and alone.

Again:

. . . I've decided to quit Venezuela this summer, and go and die in Chile, Buenos Aires or Peru; but don't count on any good from my journey if I go; for wherever I am, discord comes winging . . . disorder, and soon death. . . .

No mood is too fugitive, subtle or deep to be divulged to Santander, who was subtle and deep only in the unitary drive of his own will. But Bolivar, despite his possession by his sense of destiny, is capable of contradictory deflections. He analyzes his new uncertainty and caution to Santander:

. . . I am like a rich man who by luck has amassed a great fortune and now, because of that fact, fears to risk it to the very contingencies that won it for him. Fortune is generally blind, so I have made myself circumspect: good augury for the success of our cause. Perhaps I am wrong, but I now lean more on this prudence than on all the prophecies of the saints.

What is the common ground of these versatile letters? From their often cruel candor to their often cruel wit, they reveal

anxiety. Bolivar sensed not only that the historic drama, the *situation*, had given him Santander, and that he needed the man; he sensed also that the man was beyond him. He kept on desperately trying to possess him.

For some time, Santander's replies did not swerve from meticulous, humorless duty. His cold lips indubitably tightened as he read his superior's self-confessions and lambent little thrusts of irony; only later would he reveal protest . . . much later, anger. Santander was born and raised in Cúcuta, the Granadan city on the frontier of Venezuela; and analysts have tried to explain the man's complexity as a product of conflicting national traits: the Granadan, they agree with Bolivar, was a "man of law," but infused and secretly in love with the native violence of Venezuela. Violence, cruelty and law are not antitheses; law may be violence established and stabilized by reason; the law's cruelty may be the worst, being frozen and abstract. Yet Santander's origins offer a ground for fanciful speculation. On his mother's side, one of his ancestors was an Indian woman; and at times the American aborigine, ambuscaded deeply, looks out from his European eyes. His paternal grandfather, Don Joaquín José de Santander y Jovel de Moncada, was a captain of the Comuneros in 1781. Was he among the land-owing creoles who betrayed the folk, so submissive and naïve that they compelled their class enemies to lead them? Cúcuta itself was a town of ambiguities; ensconced in the high Andes of New Granada and Venezuela, it lies low and hot in a wide plain. At seventeen, Santander went to Bogotá and made a name for himself in the Thomist university as a brilliant student of the law. When he left the comfortable college halls to fight for independence, he was only eighteen; but his book culture would have fitted a graduate of the Sorbonne. (His learning had one flaw: he knew Latin and Greek, but no French, no English.) His writings reveal no metaphysical disquietude. Until the end of his life, he was a complacent member of the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church, and he looked with cold, silent disapproval on Bolivar's free-thinking. When he read a paragraph like this —

Dear General,

Yesterday came your appreciated word of May 7. You have done well to break your intentions; for it is a principle of religion, not to say of morality, that bad intentions should not be carried out. You, it seems to me, are as many others I have known in this world, who like to do what they would not have others do unto them: doubtless, because you are an enemy of the doting dainties of Jesus who insisted on the contrary — against the law of nature which demands everything for oneself, nothing for the others. . . .

— perhaps the Indian ambushed beyond his blond eyes kept the record.

Meanwhile, Santander went to work. He founded schools in every parish of Cundinamarca, compelling the collaboration of the local church and its funds. Between the large province and the town, he created intermediate cantons to channel communication from state to individual and from individual to state. In every provincial capital, he organized a militia, and “juntas de protección” for agriculture and commerce. He replaced the old central courts of the Viceroy and his governors with local tribunals. He reformed the prisons; established the first lazaret or leper colony; founded Bogotá’s national art museum. He abolished the Spanish custom of quartering troops on private families without consent or due remuneration. He outlawed the traditional unjust draft of Indian and peasant labor by officials; each worker must receive a minimum wage to be determined by the *juez político*. He revised taxation and canceled the shameful levies on the Indians. He was a great public servant. This did not mean that his progressive system transformed the country; but within a year at least the nation began to exist. Whether — and how soon — a nation whose sole previous gesture towards self-rule had been the tragedy-comedy of the Comuneros could achieve the organic balance of responsibility and freedom, would depend on peace — and the people.

Santander revealed his other traits. The Inquisition, of course, had been abolished. He replaced it with a “Moral Office” masked as a defense of freedom against anarchy. His .

report said: "Although the government cannot permit the establishment of tribunals of Inquisition, opposed as they are to the tender doctrine of Jesus Christ, and instituted by tyrants who under cover of religion keep the people in shameful servitude, neither can the government permit impious and scandalous doctrines to circulate." Therefore, he set up this court of churchly fathers to look into the matter "in a mode convenient to the Evangel and to the liberal system adopted by New Granada." Bolivar made no known comment. It was obvious that to Santander religion was a tool of social order; and how could Bolivar mar the very instrument he needed? A month after the Moral Office was founded, Santander expelled to the wilds of Casanare a group of venerable priests suspected of not loving the Republic. The guards were secretly instructed to spy on the old men, particularly at night when they might whisper in the dark, assuming the guards asleep. If they spoke one word against the government, they were to be shot . . . but only after they had been given time to administer extreme unction to one another. The guards reported that the talk had been exclusively of charity and theology. The old men died the natural death of malaria, a few months later in Casanare.

ARMISTICE

PUBLIC FERVOR had imposed the liberal Constitution of 1812 on Fernando, but it could not make him and his ministers intelligent. Pious words now came from Madrid to "my rebellious subjects in Tierra Firme": let them acknowledge the King "on equal footing with all Spaniards," and the ten years' war "would be forgiven." When Morillo got these terms for peace, he flew into a rage. In his cumbersome way he was a sensitive, reasoning man; almost imperceptibly he had come to respect his enemies; his semantic label of "perverse beasts" had worn thin, and he was sore troubled by them. He knew the absurdity of Madrid's invitation to the survivors of Monteverde,

Boves, himself and Sámano . . . to the victors of Boyacá! to throw their republic into the sea in exchange for paper rights under a Spanish statute. Morillo preferred simply to go on fighting, although a more introspective man would have known his heart was no longer in it. But his loyalty to the Crown was a religious emotion deeper than reason. The King ordered that he treat with the rebels? he would treat.

Employing for the first time the term "Republic of Venezuela," he invited the Congress in Angostura to a parley. The Congress referred him to Bolívar, who replied that he was pleased to negotiate an end to the carnage, but the premise must be that two free nations were conferring. This, according to instructions from Madrid, should have sufficed for Morillo; there was no basis for talks. But now his subliminal sympathy rose to the surface; he ignored Bolívar's intransigent premise, and the two commanders went on exchanging letters.

For nearly a year, since Boyacá, Bolívar had not known what military plan to follow. Should he attack Morillo for Caracas? he might lose Bogotá. Should he pursue his offensive south on Pasto and Quito? even if he won, he might lose northern New Granada. Should he hold his troops in camp? disease and desertions were deadlier than battle. There were local engagements. Mariano Montilla crept closer to Santa Marta. But José María Obando, in command of a limited thrust toward Pasto, was trounced by the royalists who pushed north again into Popayán. Santander, whose levies on Cundinamarca were supporting the whole Republic and the army, warned Bolívar that the taxes would soon make the people hate their liberators more than the King. Zea in London was a poor trader, as he had been a weak Vice-President in Angostura; he was squandering the hard-wrung national funds, paying sharpers' claims on the Republic for supplies that had never left England. Bolívar needed a truce. In order to strengthen his bargaining position, he began to bite off morsels of territory which would not too deeply involve him. Brión was sent up the Magdalena, without attacking Sámano in Cartagena. Bolívar him-

self, with a small picked force, crept from Cúcuta into Venezuela and by October had reached Trujillo, not far from Carache to the east, where Morillo had his headquarters.

The Spanish General wrote: If the time had come for a truce, would the Venezuelan General be so good as to move back to Cúcuta? Bolivar replied: General Morillo would sooner move back to Cadiz than he retire one step. This convinced the Spaniard, who sent his representatives to Trujillo. Bolivar chose Sucre as his chief negotiator, together with his Secretary, Briceño Méndez, and Lieutenant Colonel José Gabriel Pérez.

Morillo suggested a year's armistice; Bolivar's men halved it. On November 25, 1820, the six months' truce was signed: Each party was to remain within the territory it possessed on that day and to engage in no offensive action. Plenipotentiaries were to proceed at once to Madrid to confer on peace. By separate treaty, the war was regularized for the future: no prisoners were to be shot, even if they were deserters from the capturing army; their exchange and Christian care were to be provided. Seven and a half years before, in a house on the same steep street of Trujillo, Bolivar had proclaimed War without Quarter.

The moods of the two commanders differed. Morillo, sick of a fight that had no rules, nostalgic for the regular war games of Europe, was willing to obey orders and let the ministers in Madrid have their chance with the infidels. Bolivar wanted peace but, according to O'Leary, his Irish aide who had become his confidant, he was sure he would not have it. The armistice gave the provinces of the new nation their first pause, in which to contemplate themselves. It gave time, and time was now on the side of the Republic.

Bolivar worked sincerely and *completely* for the peace he was sure he would not have. (This was typical of his detachment — his firm sense of playing a rôle.) The ministers plenipotentiary he sent to Madrid were the best men he could find: José Rafael Ravenga, Minister of the Treasury, a Venezuelan, and the Governor of Bogotá, José Tiburcio Echevarría. Their

secret instructions reveal no flaw in Bolivar's sincerity. If Spain would recognize Colombia, they were to give her Panama in exchange for Quito (both in Spanish hands). If this was not enough, Spain could keep both Panama and Quito, as the price of recognition. Did Bolivar go so far because he knew the bargain would not be accepted? What if it had been? how did this harmonize with the Bolivarian dream of a free continent? There was no deep conflict. Peace in free Colombia, Mexico and Buenos Aires, Bolivar hoped, would bring civil order; order would generate so strong a field of freedom that Spain could not long survive in Quito, Panama — nor the Empire in Brazil. Independence on almost any terms: then the true task of creating unity and order. For the chance of it, Bolivar was ready to give up two provinces of his nation — and the good will of many of his compatriots, who would not understand this armistice, much less such a peace. He worked *as if* it might be; he knew it would not!

In the same dialectical spirit, to coincide with the arrival of the envoys, he addressed the "imbecile tyrant" in Madrid:

To His Catholic Majesty, Señor Fernando VII, King of the Spains:
Señor:

Permit me to direct to your throne of love and law my most sincere felicitations upon your accession to the largest and most free empire on earth. Since you have wielded the scepter of justice for Spaniards and of peace for Americans,¹ you are consecrated to immortality.

Peace, Señor; you have pronounced peace; we joyously repeat it. Peace it shall be, since it is your will and ours.

Your Majesty has wished to hear the truth about us, to know our reasons, doubtless in order to be just with us. If you reveal yourself so great, your Government so generous, Colombia will begin its natural life in the political world. Help the new order of things, and Your Majesty will find himself upon a summit, presiding over the prosperity of all peoples.

The existence of Colombia, Señor, is necessary for the peace of Your Majesty and for the happiness of us Colombians. It is our ambition to offer to Spaniards a second fatherland, but it must be erect,

¹ Bolivar refers to the liberal Constitution, which Fernando had been compelled by the army's revolt to adopt; and to the Armistice.

not prostrate with chains. Let Spaniards come to us to reap harvests of virtue, industry and knowledge — not to snatch at them by force!

Deign to hear the voice of nature, with which our envoys appeal to the model and glory of kings. Accept the humble, respectful homage of

your most obedient servant, Señor.

SIMON BOLIVAR

When the Spaniards had signed the armistice agreements, they told Sucre that General Morillo wished greatly to know the person of General Bolivar. A meeting was arranged for the next day.

THE MEETING

SANTA ANA, a poor village, lay halfway between Trujillo and the Spanish outpost. Still inaccessible today except by horse and mule, it was a cluster of huts with children in large felt hats, pigs and chickens on the street, a clumsy church, a communal pump in the dust of the plaza. Mountains clad in laurel above the fields of cane and maize sent down streams, piercing as flutes, and above all the sapphire glare of the sky.

Morillo arrived first. The shepherd's son wore the full dress of the generals of Spain, bemedaled and beribboned. With him were La Torre, his second-in-command, fifty officers and a squadron of Hussars. Colonel O'Leary rode down the hill from the west to announce that his chief was coming. Morillo asked about Bolivar's escort. "Ten or twelve officers and the Spanish armistice commissioners," replied O'Leary. "Good!" Morillo exclaimed. "I thought my guard was pretty small, considering where I've ventured. But it seems my old opponent has worsted me in chivalry." He sent the Hussars back. "Which of my officers is odious to your Commander?" O'Leary named them, and they too returned to Carache.

A group appeared over the crest of the hill. "Which is

Bolivar?" Morillo asked. And when he was told: "What! the little fellow in the blue coat? with the fatigue cap? the one on the mule?"

Both generals dismounted and silently clasped hands. Morillo had selected the least miserable hut for the best possible semblance of a feast. On the long crude tables stood flagons of red Rioja wine.

Talk was relaxed, and soon gay. The two men had the same tongue. To Morillo, Bolivar was an infidel, yet a Spaniard, an aristocrat, an unorthodox artist of war. To Bolivar, his enemy was a man devoted to his duty as he saw it. The Spanish language, muscular and rotund, builds easily into a rolling structure to carry men along, as a high sea floats a vessel. Nothing was said of the bloody years: all men must die; nor of the betrayals, treacheries and executions: all men are sinners. There must be peace, both agreed, and they drank to it. Bolivar proposed that if some incident during the truce threatened hostilities, a board of arbitrament decide it. For the Republic's representatives he named the Spanish General Correa, a recent republican convert. Morillo was touched. Now it was his turn. A monument, he suggested, should commemorate this peaceful meeting of brothers. No sooner said than done. The two chiefs went into the public square; and while the mountaineers, the women, the children and the domestic animals looked on, a huge boulder was rolled in from the hill; Spain and America clasped hands on it. Every Spaniard and every man whose tongue is Spanish owns the sacramental, Platonic core of Catholic culture: all life is drama, like the Mass — to be heard, seen, tasted, while it is enacted.

When night rose swiftly from the dark wood, engulfing the village, candles were lit in empty bottles of wine; the two generals supped, and slept in the same room.

Morillo returned almost at once to Spain. La Torre, who succeeded him, was a far inferior soldier: this replacement, a first victory for Bolivar. Two weeks before, he had written to Santander: "The forces of La Torre don't deserve the trouble

to destroy them. But the fifteen hundred mutinous Englishmen of D'Evereux, the intrigues of Mariño, Arismendi . . . these are indeed worth my attention." Letters poured into his hands as he rode back toward Bogotá, angry letters, some scurrilous: how did he dare truckle to the Spaniards? what was the bribe? They hurt, but he ignored them. Soon came word from Madrid: the Colombian commissioners had been received personally as gentlemen — and officially spanked as naughty children. "Now, go back to your colony and be good." The Armistice rotted before it was ripe. Guayaquil, the great port of Quito, declared its independence. The republicans of Maracaibo, in unofficial communication with General Urdaneta, a native of the port, rebelled despite the truce and gave the city to Colombia. La Torre protested this infraction. Bolivar wrote a long brief: the Armistice could not bar a city, any more than it could prevent an individual, from voluntarily changing status. He offered arbitration — and got ready for war. La Torre refused the arbitration.

Bolivar proposed a new agreement: La Torre would discharge all Americans from his army, while Bolivar dismissed an equal number of soldiers. The purpose was to regularize the war still more radically, as between two nations — and to lessen the expense of maintaining the republican armies during the rainy season. La Torre refused. They agreed to cut the six months' pause to five. Meanwhile, the first Congress of Colombia, dated to convene in Cúcuta on January 1, finally opened — only five months behind schedule.

Bolivar's tempo grew swift again. The Armistice was dead, and events crowded. Valdés, who had replaced Obando in the South, recaptured Popayán. But he was a poor statesman, and the self-declared independence of Guayaquil demanded delicate treatment. Bolivar sent Sucre, making him commander of all the South. Brión's ships, in conjunction with Urdaneta, liberated Santa Marta and Rio Hacha, south of still royalist Panama. (This was Brión's last contribution; in less than a year he was dead.) Bermúdez in Oriente freed Barcelona. But La Torre, anchored on Cumaná, Caracas, Valencia, and the

great fort of Puerto Cabello, was a deadly enclave. He had to be destroyed.

His army was Spain's best in the Americas, the creation of Morillo, Spain's best soldier. Half of its fifteen thousand veterans were Venezuelans.

C A R A B O B O

STILL BOLIVAR was uncertain what to do; the cause, the imprecision of his instruments. Zea in London had accumulated debts, not supplies; Arismendi in Margarita was so recalcitrant that Bolivar again considered his arrest; Mariño, as Bolivar wrote to Santander, "continues his main business" — which was intrigue; Páez failed to deliver the cattle on which Bolivar's and Urdaneta's men depended to keep alive (the ranchers of Apure found more profit selling to the royalists in Valencia and Caracas, who exported hides, indigo, cacao and livestock to Spain, the United States, Britain, and who paid in gold, than to Santander, whose economy, without world markets, was based on paper). Bolivar was now constantly nagging Santander for more pesos, and Santander was constantly complaining that if he extracted more from his countrymen, he would lose the country.

The logical step, of course, was to concentrate all republican power and in one ultimate battle destroy La Torre's army. But if the forces marched from the peripheries across the many hundred miles to Venezuela's center, how could Bolivar be sure they would all march? how could he be sure they would eat, while they marched? and if he succeeded in getting them together, how would they survive until La Torre gave them the chance to destroy him? So difficult were the logistics of the logical campaign, that for a while Bolivar gave it up. In his archives was found an alternate plan, in the handwritings of Sucre and Briceño Méndez. It called for a series of more loosely integrated tasks: Bermúdez with his army of Oriente would strike west and take Caracas; Páez from his quarters

south of San Fernando would strike north at Calabozo and the Valley of Aragua; then join with Bermúdez, who must have won Caracas, and move west to Valencia, where Bolivar would attack from the Andes. It was a risky scheme, for it left La Torre with his interior lines, from which he could deal blows *seriatim* in all directions, and if he broke one part, the whole construction tottered. But it seemed almost safe compared to the alternative: huge marches without adequate supplies through ravaged country, the long-shot conjunction of the armies — and their being able to survive, once they were together, in an empty land, until they got their chance at La Torre. The “safe” plan never reached the generals; Bolivar threw it out for the other, more dangerous but closer to the form of his genius.

So it was decided: Bermúdez from the east would feint at Caracas to draw La Torre’s attention from the south and west; Urdaneta’s men, now for the most part west of Lake Maracaibo, the army of Páez from the south, and Bolivar’s *Guardia* from the west, would converge on a fixed point. This at first was Barinas, but by drawing La Torre away through the feints of Bermúdez, it could be moved eastward. The plan was like writing in the dark — and on sand; Bolivar could not know if the armies were safely converging until they were actually together; and this depended on blind factors of supplies and leaders. In essence it was as daring as the march from Angostura to Boyacá; but more complex — and it was not an action he could hold in his own hands.

It worked. Bermudez flashed so brilliantly from the east that for a day he occupied Caracas, and part of La Torre’s army was drawn far east to drive him back; harassing his shoulder, Bolivar compelled La Torre’s withdrawal from San Carlos, sixty miles south of Valencia, which now became the meeting-point for the converging republican armies. Urdaneta made the distance from Maracaibo, nearly four hundred dangerous miles (losing a third of his men); and less than a week later Páez was in San Carlos. La Torre stood a few miles to the north in the plain of Carabobo.

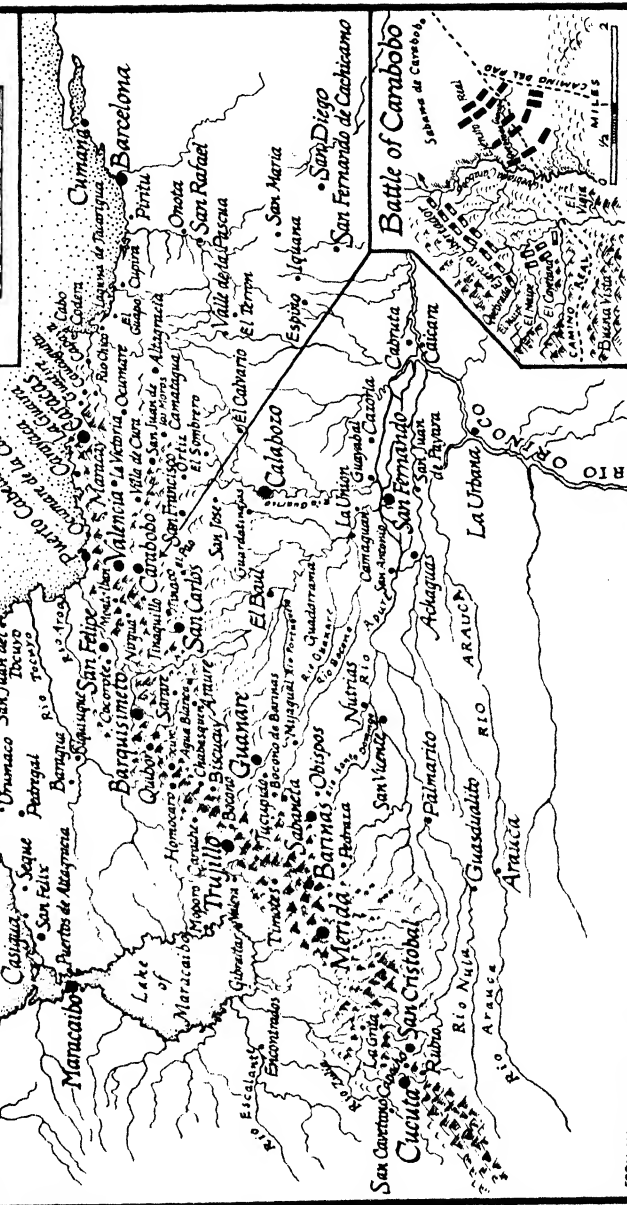
Ten thousand Colombian soldiers had started their month's or five weeks' marches through the flooded winter; less than seven thousand arrived; and every inactive day while they half-starved, malaria would consume them. The need was to draw La Torre at once into battle. Bolivar sent envoys to propose an armistice, hoping to spur the Spaniard to attack in the belief that the Colombians were weak and afraid to fight. La Torre was in no hurry. On June 23, in the rain, Bolivar reviewed his army on the savannah of Taguanes, where in the *Campana Admirable* of 1813 he had won a victory over Monteverde. He had failed to move La Torre to attack him on his own terms; he ordered his troops forward.

The plain of Carabobo, suavely descending north toward Valencia, is closed on the south and the southwest by a ravine of matted brush, through which horse and man may pass only in single file. At the east was a road from Valencia to the south. At the west, several hundred feet below the plain, and divided from it by an open hollow, was a wood so thick, thorned and tangled that a man must hack his way through it, step by step, with a machete. La Torre, under the rain, faced south on the high ground of the plain with about fifty-five hundred men. His artillery could sweep, and his cavalry, deployed on his left, was ready to detect every approach, which he was sure was possible only from south, east or southwest. Bolivar, hidden in a hut on a distant hill, read the Spaniard's confident mind in the disposition of his troops; and decided to attack where he was not expected: from the west jungle. It was the same strategy as Písha, the selection of the "impossible" approach. His fighting force (it had shrunk to about sixty-four hundred) was in three divisions; Páez commanded the first, with the British Legion, the Apure bravos and twelve squadrons; Cedeño the second, Plaza the third. To Páez went the crucial task of cutting through the "impossible" west jungle.

It took his tough horsemen two and a half hours, battling the wood, the thorn, the muck and the hot rain. When they emerged into the open hollow, La Torre's cavalry charged at

CARIBBEAN SEA

STATUTE MILES



FROM MAP BY VICENTE IECUMA

them; his artillery was pointed; but he had been compelled to reshape his entire line-up. The llaneros were driven back. The British Legion came forward in their place, knelt while they fired, and did not budge under the withering cannon. Páez re-formed his cavalry, while the British held, and again swept forward. At this moment, Bolivar sent Cedeño through the southwest ravine, and as the second division broke into the plain, he hurled his third division forward from the south. La Torre was surrounded; in an hour he was broken and dispersed.

Twelve hundred royalists were dead and wounded, fifteen hundred were captured. The British Legion had lost both its leaders, Farriar and Davy; Generals Cedeño (the man of color) and Plaza (the creole aristocrat) were both mortally wounded, and Páez fell from his horse in a fit. The chief honor was his; Bolivar made him Commander-in-chief of all the forces of Venezuela.

AGAIN, HOME

BEFORE CARABOBO, Bolivar knew (and in quiet confidence wrote) that he would defeat La Torre; yet his mood was dark. The first Congress of Colombia, his creation, had convened; yet nine days before the battle, deep in its preparation, he wrote to Santander:

. . . At last, at last, these lettered gentlemen (the delegates) will get themselves excluded from the Republic, as Plato barred the poets from his. They think the people's will is the same as their opinions, they do not know that in Colombia, the army is the people. . . . It is the people who care, the people who work, the people who *can*; all the rest is individuals vegetating with more or less malignance. . . . They believe, these gentlemen, that Colombia is nothing but woolly lambs huddled next to the chimneys of Bogotá, Tunja, Pamplona. They've never laid eyes on the Caribs of the Orinoco, the herders of Apure, the sailors of Maracaibo, the oarsmen of the Magdalena, the bandits of Patia, the fanatics of Pasto, the savage Guajibos of Casanare . . . all the fierce hordes of Africa and America who, like the

bucks of fallow deer, wander the solitudes of Colombia. . . . Do you not agree, dear Santander, that the legislators, more ignorant than evil, more presumptuous than ambitious, are bound to lead us into anarchy, then tyranny, — always ruin?

And to Pedro Gual, soon to be Foreign Minister (a month before Carabobo):

Men like you cannot form a precise idea of the spirit of our soldiers. . . . Even I, who have lived at their head, do not know what they are capable of. . . . Believe me, dear Gual, we are on the edge of an abyss, or rather a volcano, soon to erupt. *I fear peace more than war.*

His forebodings had many strata. It was Bolivar's tragic genius to experience constantly *the stage ahead* of his contemporary life. The years before victory . . . years of defeat, frustration, exile . . . were his happiest because he was living the victory beyond them. Now already, immersed in victory, he lived beyond it. Carabobo (of course he did not know the specific fact) was to be the last major battle physically fought by himself. (The destiny of Sucre was rising; he knew, he accepted, he joyously helped.) Bolivar loved the simple lyricism of battle, precisely because he was so much more than a soldier. He could give himself to an engagement of arms because it momentarily cleansed him of his complexities; as he could give himself to a woman although he did not wholly love or comprehend her. Both were palliatives: battle for his exhausting vision of a new world, woman for the sheer pain of his nerves. Of course, to him, battle was more important, the greatest joy, being a function of his destiny, a step toward his America. But even if Bolivar had literally known that the remaining decisive encounters with Spain (Pichincha, Ayacucho) were to be fought by Sucre, this would have explained only the periphery of his darkness.

The curse of this American war, to his mind hungry for mathematical precisions and finalities in the field of politics (a sad contradiction), was that no single battle could ever decide as a sword cuts a Gordian knot. Waterloo decided, because the

war was of men and of formed nations: mass them, join them, and as in physics they give a fixed result: *quod erat demonstrandum*. But in this war men were almost incidental, the contest was of unwieldy lands and nebulous peoples not to be substantiated by a single action. Thus La Torre was overwhelmed in Carabobo. Yet, with two-thirds of his soldiers, he was safe in Puerto Cabello. But this too was a mere surface of Bolivar's darkness.

At dusk of the fourth day after the battle, Bolivar rode into Caracas, his home city. Since the flight from Boves with twenty thousand of his fellow men, women and children, the return had taken exactly seven years! His heart which loved Caracas, his eyes which loved the tempest beauty of his land (only when Bolivar spoke of the valleys and mountains of America did he gracefully use words which lovers use with women), must have flinched at what he saw. Caracas was broken. The dwellings and churches shattered by the earthquake still lay in their shards; the streets were sordid with neglect. Caracas in 1810 had been a bud, close-petaled, resilient, fragrant, ready to bloom. Less than a third of its inhabitants remained, and they were soiled and faded. Yet they rose to greet him. He came without pomp, accompanied only by Páez and a small staff. The people cheered; from the wall of a ruined house a woman placed two wreaths of flowers on his head; one, he transferred to the brow of General Páez. They escorted him to his old home at the corner of Las Gradillas (in Caracas the intersections, not the streets, have names). The house was no longer his, but with Hispanic delicacy they had restored it for him. The populace pressed in, he was extremely tired, and the rain was more real than the homecoming. It was midnight before they could clear the salons, the patios, the plaza; and Bolivar went to bed in the room of his childhood. None of the family was with him. But the dark of his mood was deeper than homesickness; he knew that the same destiny which had taken his home, his parents, his wife, his kin, now must take Caracas, must take Venezuela from him. He had work to do: a thousand miles southward.

He had lived like a shuttle, weaving back and forth the thread of blood into the cloth of vision. He was home a mere moment. And even this moment, how could he live with ease?

Carlos Soublette, now Vice-President of the Department of Venezuela and Governor of Caracas, a man of intellect and sober loyalty, tall, stooped, cadaverous, warned Bolivar what would happen if he left the reconquered country. Mariño and Arismendi in the east . . . Páez in his "patriecita" of Apure, "independent of one another and subject only to God" (the terms are Soublette's): what would they do, if Bolivar did not remain? what would a dozen other caudillos, smaller than Páez in all but their jaguar-ferocity, not do in emulation, throughout the loose land? There was work for Bolivar at home, for a generation. But there was also Pasto, Quito, Peru; there was Cartagena, Panama, Puerto Cabello, all still Spanish. There was the Congress. And, for that matter, there was Santander. . . . Bolivar must remain; Bolivar must go. From such conflict, his darkness.

Soublette pursued the Spanish garrison of La Guaira fleeing by land to La Torre in Puerto Cabello; and mopped it up. If only the ultimate tasks were so simple! Bolivar took the road to San Mateo, to be alone for a few days.

The familiar road: Sabana Grande, Chacao, Los Teques, the lofty valleys thunderous with green and with rain, the torrents gushing down like inverted rockets, the groves of cambure (fat bananas) with leaves longer than his horse, the cacao trees shaded beneath the giant samanas and ceibas, their huge lozenge nuts aglow like rubies in the perpetual twilight: he loved this world! Probably he recalled as he rode the years with Rodríguez. What had happened to Don Simón? had the pupil's fame touched the master? (Bolivar thought often of Europe; what was said of him there concerned him morbidly.) The mountains maneuvered like cavalry, defending his gentle valley of Aragua.

During the brief days, Bolivar cleared again for action. But of course, everything had been decided. What if he had left New Granada to Santander, Quito to Sucre, Peru to the Peru-

vians and San Martín — and remained in Venezuela? Such questions ignore the organic reality of the man and his hour. The truth was that Santander did govern New Granada; Sucre had his own day in Guayaquil and Quito; as to Peru, Bolívar was in no position even if he had wanted to interfere with the plans of San Martín. Bolívar was compelled southward by less manifest causes. Free Colombia, intact with all her lands, he felt was *his* assignment; and this could not be — not the integrity of the smallest village, the humblest villager, without the organic order of a Federation of the Andes, of an American free Hemisphere. He could not suddenly take his hands from his own work. He could and did delegate tasks; but he needed to be *there* for the inevitable crises: to take command as the artist takes command of his unfinished picture.

But there was more. Bolívar's intuition of the tremendous struggles still mounting in the south was based on lucid knowledge and analysis of the *facts* (soon Sucre, then Peru, would call desperately for his coming); but pure intuition fed his impure need for power and his presumptuous creator-need to forge with his own hands his own conception of the future. He had *reasons* for what he did, but also he had *rationalizations*.

No single motive can expound this man of many Americas. A phase of him sincerely longed to remain home; even dreamed (as his letters spoke) of a peaceful villa near Caracas. It hurt him to have created a nation whose capital was Bogotá, so that he had to be in Bogotá, with his own country (theoretically independent for a decade) reduced to a department, its capital to a provincial city. The Venezuelans did not like this; he also did not like this. What could he do? He could not remain even in Bogotá! The whole south of New Granada was subversive, poisoning the nation's blood. And Peru, an enclave of Spain, could destroy free America, like a cancer.

Meanwhile, there was the immediate problem of the Congress, convened in Cúcuta; and of his old conflict between civil and military duties. He had resolved not to be President of Colombia. Antonio Nariño, the Precursor of New Granada,

was home again, freed from the dungeons of Spain when the liberals compelled Fernando (for a while) to accept their constitution. Who more fitting for the Presidency? Roscío, the Vice-President of Colombia, had died; Azuolo, who succeeded him, died almost at once; Bolivar named Antonio Nariño interim Vice-President, until the Congress chose permanent officers. (Santander was Vice-President, not of Colombia, but of the Department of Cundinamarca.) Bolivar welcomed the old revolutionary hero back to Bogotá; in April, he wrote him a long letter:

I have great confidence you will smooth out the troubles . . . of the Congress. I want the legislative body . . . to build the first foundations of the Republic . . . for what have we done but clear the ground of twenty-two provinces; and what have we but a book that speaks to no one [Venezuela's Constitution]? You will see for yourself, there is nothing. The government transition [from Venezuela to Colombia], the commissions of certain men in foreign countries, the death of two Vice-Presidents, the absence of the ministers, the difficulties holding up the opening of Congress, the lack of a common tax system, incoherence in all departments, my absence from the capital and absorption in the army, all this, and how much more! has (one might say) orphaned the Republic. Colombia is governed by the sword of those who defend her; instead of a social body, she is a camp. The abuses, neglects, lack of organicity, are the result of causes it has not been in my power to correct, for many reasons: *first*, because a man in brief time and with scant general knowledge cannot do everything; not well, not even badly; *second*, because I have had to devote myself to expelling the enemy; *third*, because in our frightening chaos of patriots, traitors, egoists, white, colored, Venezuelans, Granadans, federalists, centralists, republicans, aristocrats, good and bad, and the whole caboodle of hierarchies in which every band is split, there are so many conditions to be observed that, dear friend, I have been forced many a time to be unjust in order to be politic — and when I've been just I've paid for it!

Convinced, intimately, deeply, that our government should be headed by someone other than a soldier always absent on a frontier, that the command of state and army should be divided, I've sent my resignation. May you with all good citizens accept it! If not, count on the government's perpetual orphanship; indeed, on my desertion the day the enemy is gone. Believe me, dear friend, in the

eight years I've governed, I've meditated much. I neither know how, nor can, nor want to govern. To do a job well, one must like it — indeed passionately love it.

But every day I feel greater repugnance for authority. If I head the army, it is because from the first I've longed to help expel our oppressors; wherefore this task is mine, not through merit but through passion. I beg of you to employ all your influence to spare me from a task so uncongenial to me and to the country's credit; from which both would suffer more than can be foreseen. For imagine the impression on the outside world of a chief magistrate's deserting! . . .

If you do not care to be President, there are others . . . as worthy as yourself. General Santander would serve well; if not he, Urdaneta, Montilla, Restrepo, Peñalver . . . and others. . . . In my opinion, the President should be a soldier and a Granadan; the Vice-President a civilian and a Venezuelan; in order to avoid jealousies and discords — if indeed, in this tumult of blind passion, they can be avoided.

BOLIVAR

P.S. You may show this letter to Peñalver.

On the same day, he wrote the same message to Santander, including a copy of the letter to Nariño; to Pedro Gual, who was to be his chief whip at the Congress, and to his venerable friend of youthful days in Caracas, Fernando Peñalver:

. . . I have borne the burden of your misfortunes with you, since we saw each other! the death of your wife, the poverty of your family, your illness, the troubles of all kinds these years have made you suffer. Believe me, friend, in the uproar of military action, I have kept enough sensitivity to feel with you, to share with you. I would send you some assistance, if I had a penny left of what I drew in Bogotá when we won that capital. But it's long since I spent the last peso; I took it to aid my family and the families of several generals; the rest is long since squandered by Domingo Ascanio. . . .

He repeats his argument in favor of Antonio Nariño or Santander for President, and asks Peñalver's active help:

The President should be a soldier of New Granada, the Vice-President a civilian of Venezuela. . . . I will not be President, not if they name me a thousand and one times! I'm tired of eight years of governing a Republic of ingrates, I'm sick of being called a usurper, a tyrant, a despot; even more sick of duties so contrary to

my nature. . . . Remember, I've never seen an account, I do not wish to know what is spent in my house; and I'm no good at diplomacy, I'm too ingenuous, often too violent. . . . I would not qualify even for Vice-President of a Department — although I might serve to pacify it. . . .

The reference to money throws light on Bolivar's sense of his work as a mission. He rewarded his generals: Santander had *Hato Grande*, one of the greatest estancias of Cundinamarca; Páez received lands which in a decade would make him the richest man in Venezuela; Spanish estates were allotted to all the worthiest soldiers, who indeed soon founded an oligarchy: a danger to the Republic which Bolivar in his economic ignorance recognized too late. According to the law of division of the confiscated Spanish wealth, Bolivar was entitled to a share of twenty-five thousand pesos; he refused it. As interim President of Colombia, he had an annual salary of fifty thousand pesos; he did not take it, drawing only fourteen thousand pesos, which he sent to his sisters and to the mother of his brother's children. He lived literally from day to day, on army supplies.

A week after these emotional letters, he sent an even more emotional resignation to the President of the Cúcuta Congress.

Señor,

The installation of the august Congress of Colombia, composed of the representatives of twenty-two freed provinces, fills my deepest hopes. The Republic, now based upon delegates of the peoples of Venezuela and Cundinamarca, may achieve the happiness and liberty to which the newborn nation aspires; and I, now that the legitimate bearers of the peoples' sovereignty begin their sacred functions, consider myself exempt of all executive authority.

I was named interim President by the Congress of Venezuela; and since it is you who represent Colombia, I am not President of the Republic. I was not elected by it; I lack the talents required for its welfare and glory, my duties as a soldier are incompatible with a Magistrate's; also, I am tired of hearing myself called tyrant by my enemies; and by character and feeling I am insuperably repugnant to the office.

Please accept my homage, my adhesion, my solemn oath of obedi-

ence. But if the Congress persists, as I fear it may, in continuing me as President of the State, I shall renounce the proud title of citizen of Colombia and depart from its shores. . . .

The pattern by now is familiar; and we know better than to call Bolívar simply sincere or insincere. If he was bluffing, his bluff could be called. Whether he meant it or not, what kept the delegates from taking Bolívar at his word and choosing Nariño, Santander, or any man on whom they might agree, and whom Bolívar was solemnly committed to accept as President? Nothing — except the internal situation of the delegates and of the country. This Bolívar instinctively knew — which does not stultify his resignation. He made another proposal to the Congress: a wise one. The Republic was divided by the three great departments of the old kingdom of New Granada: Venezuela, the main body of New Granada, now called Cundinamarca, and Quito. Fearing the predominance of Cundinamarca and Bogotá (to which Panama was subject) over Venezuela, Bolívar proposed a neutral, intermediate department between them, to be composed of western Venezuela (Coro, Maracaibo, Barinas, the Andean provinces of Mérida and Trujillo) and of northeastern New Granada (from Pamplona to Santa Marta): this new department to be governed, not by a Vice-President like the others, but directly by the President, with the national capital at Cúcuta.

The few days in San Mateo rested Bolívar superficially; but he was called back to Caracas. A month and a day from his arrival after Carabobo, he left his native city, bound for the Congress and the campaign to secure Guayaquil and Quito. He was not yet forty, he had matured late, and he was beginning to tire. His nerves showed it. His aides reported that the most insignificant attack in some provincial rag depressed him. His voice had become dry and hoarse, a sign of strain. He would go on with his creative work: the rough-hewing of free America Hispana, but he was learning that he himself was symbol and substance of the sacrifice it demanded. This latest

violent letter of resignation: can it not be explained as the cry of his nerves within his meager body that was already (although this he did not know) attainted by consumption? If only the tension could be partially eased! Here Bolivar's strict rationalist mind betrayed him. He was on speaking terms with no God, could find no respite in emotional communion with the cosmic Spirit. His amours gave him but fleeting relaxation: he was far too busy, and he had found no woman strong enough to hold him. Guiding his horse west again on the immense interminable journey that was his life, Bolivar must have thought with hope on Nariño, Santander, Páez, Sucre. . . .

For all but the last time, he rode through the valley of his boyhood; he did not stop, not for an hour. At Valencia, San Carlos, Barquisimeto, he reviewed recruits and discussed with local men the insoluble problem of supplies. Coro had had another royalist revolt; doubtless Soublette could handle it. At Maracaibo, the news came: the Congress had elected him constitutional President of Colombia for a term of four years. Fifty delegates had voted for him, seven for other candidates. Santander was the new Vice-President of the Republic, in place of Antonio Nariño.

It had been a pitiful mistake to rely on the fifty-seven-year-old veteran of the Granadan revolution: Nariño had come back from Spain's prisons a worn-out man, his pertinacity mere cussedness, the muscles of his mind turned to fat. He antagonized the delegates over whom Bolivar had hoped he would preside; got involved in scandal with an English officer's wife who claimed he had insulted her, and was an easy victim to Santander who wanted him effaced as a threat to his own power. Bolivar had yet to learn the lethal effect of success on most professional revolutionists; perhaps the lucky ones were those who died in early battles.

He sent a messenger ahead to the Congress; he would accept office on these conditions: that he be authorized to carry on the war wherever it took him, until the last Spanish army was expelled from America; that the Vice-President be empowered to exercise the full functions of the Magistrate while he was ab-

sent from the capital; and that he be permitted to resign as soon as the war was over. Then, in a small sloop, he crossed Lake Maracaibo. He had left Caracas August 1; he was in Cúcuta September 22.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1821

OF THE ninety-five elected delegates to the first Colombian Congress, only fifty-seven — from nineteen freed provinces (not twenty-two, as Bolivar had surmised) — got to Cúcuta. They met in the sacristy of a church (soon to be ruined by an earthquake), not far from the house where Santander was born; in a hall of Gothic windows, ceilinged with dark oak rafters. They represented an even smaller proportion of the inhabitants of the country than the men who gathered in Philadelphia to write the American Constitution.² The first struggle was over the wording of this marriage of Venezuela, Cundinamarca and Quito: should it be a “federation of independent republics” or a “union of departments”? The central unionists won (on this issue, Santander, Gual, Peñalver, Nariño, stood with Bolivar). To combat the separatist trend of the three great divisions, *seven* were carved from them. (This was no improvement over Bolivar’s plan of one new middle-department between Venezuela and Cundinamarca, which might have attained real weight to balance the other two, whereas the arbitrary *seven* remained paper figments.) The President was elected by the legislature of two houses, whose representatives and senators were chosen by provincial electoral colleges, elected in turn by all the voters. The President’s cabinet was a mere advisory committee; the executive power remained subordinate to the legislature. This, in Bolivar’s judgment, was a fatal flaw, since the Congress voiced the far-flung provinces, not the nation as a whole. To balance this executive weakness and its threat of chaos, the President in times of crisis could ask Congress for

² These have been reckoned as the choice of ten per cent in some states, of as low as two per cent in others, of the qualified voters.

"extraordinary powers," powers practically dictatorial. This, in a land where crisis was endemic, proved very soon to be an aggravation, not a cure of weakness.

' Suffrage qualifications were broad for that epoch. All Colombian men, married or twenty-one, could vote, if they had a profession, business or trade, or owned property worth a hundred pesos, and if they were not domestic servants. After 1840, all voters must be able to read and write. In 1812 Miranda had freed the slaves who enlisted in the army; Bolivar in 1813 had freed his own slaves, and in 1816 proclaimed the equality of all Venezuelans. In 1819 he exhorted the Angostura Congress to make this total freedom effective. Now, to his great anger, the Cúcuta Congress passed a law of gradual abolition. All Colombians born after July 19, 1821, were free; an inheritance tax ranging from two to ten per cent provided a fund for manumission. Indians were full citizens; their tributes were abolished. The Inquisition was ended. The Constitution did not name religion: this was the best the liberals could do to achieve freedom of worship in a land where religion meant the Roman Church, and where all primary education had for centuries been in the hands of the clergy. Freedom of speech and press were guaranteed — and soon virulently abused. The Constitution declared itself unchangeable for ten years; after 1831, it could be amended. Bogotá (not Cúcuta, as Bolivar had wished) was the capital of the nation. This made the seat of government approximately equidistant between Venezuela and unliberated Quito. It suited Santander, Bogotá's political boss.

The delegates who wrote the Constitution (as Bolivar feared) were more attentive to the libertarian ideas bred in the books and laws of France, Britain, the United States, than to the facts of their own unwieldy world. The President was the creature of a House and Senate which would inevitably *stratify the instability* of the nation; and the extreme remedy proposed . . . extraordinary powers in times of crisis . . . was worse than the disease. As Gil Fortoul, Venezuela's great legal historian, put

it: "The history of the Constitution of Cúcuta was to be the history of its violations."

Santander approved; the law and the choice of Bogotá as the capital meant he could control the Legislature, and in Bolívar's absence, he as Vice-President would rule the country. The Venezuelans did not like it; they saw themselves reduced to a minority province. Quito had not yet had the chance to approve or dislike. Bolívar was filled with forebodings, which . . . as his letters reveal . . . preceded the meeting of the Congress. He addressed it:

"An office is for me a place of torture. . . . I am not the Magistrate the Republic needs for its welfare."

The Congress again rejected his refusal, and by acclamation Bolívar and Santander were declared unanimously elected. On October 3 they were sworn in. Six days later Bolívar left to open his campaign in the south. Santander, by Presidential decree in charge of State, returned to Bogotá.

V I I I

Quito and Guayaquil: The Critical Point

"America is in chrysalis; there will be a metamorphosis in the physical existence of the peoples; finally a new caste of all men, whence the unity of the country."

THE DARK PASSAGE

IN MAY, 1821, just before the battle of Carabobo, Sucre had sailed up the *ría* of Guayaquil, and the city with spacious streets and avenues arcaded against the sun and the rain welcomed the young general from the North. This Ecuadorian harbor, one hundred and thirty miles wide, forty miles long, is the greatest Pacific port south of San Francisco. Forests of dense hardwood and balsa, every fruit and grain of the warm lands, enclose it; kine fatten on grass that is higher than a man. Guayaquil is the port of Quito. When the kingdom of New Granada was created, Guayaquil passed with Quito under the domain of Bogotá; hence, by the rule of *uti possidetis*: that the republics keep the frontiers of the old kingdoms, it was in Colombia. But Spain in 1803 had been at war with England; Cartagena, the sea-fortress of New Granada, was too remote, wherefore the King ordered Peru to defend Guayaquil and its shipyards. In 1809, when Quito rebelled, it was easier for Spain to ship troops from Peruvian Callao. Finally, in 1819, Madrid affirmed the dependency of Guayaquil on Peru, for the duration of the war. These steps had results: merchants, soldiers, intellectuals, bureaucrats, a strong minority in the port, became partisans of Peru; and when the city at last rose against Spain, the popular Assembly (although most of the

people were for Colombia) named a Junta of three men who favored eventual union with Peru. In compromise, the city became a "free republic." The Junta's president was José Joaquín Olmedo, the poet, educated in Lima's University. The rich landowners of Peru had not stirred to free their country; but when San Martín marched in with his Argentine-Chilean army, the ancient Peruvian appetite for empire revived. They wanted Guayaquil; indeed they were sure that Peru, with fifteen hundred miles of coast and not a first-class harbor, needed Guayaquil. San Martín, who thought he needed the rich creoles to help govern the country, found it wise to satisfy their territorial hunger. American imperialism was born, before the new republics were out of the womb. . . .

Bolívar's instructions to Sucre were precise. He was to salute the Junta but affirm Colombia's right to the city. He was to ask for the military command, build an army, and march on the Spaniards in Quito before they came down on him from the high Andes. Sucre built his army, strengthened by troops from Peru under the Peruvian Andrés de Santa Cruz. He defeated the Spaniards when they came down from Quito, but half-way back, at Ambato, the disobedience of his second in command cost him the one defeat in his career. He bluffed the Spanish general into a ninety-day truce, re-formed his army, and was soon ready for his great campaign that would end in the victory of Pichincha.

Bolívar meantime sent letters to San Martín in Lima, and to Olmedo, expounding Colombia's legal claim to the Captaincy General of Quito, including its port; and denying the right of a city to secede or to join another nation. In the United States, the great debate on nullification and secession had begun; and Bolívar, aware of its threat to the North American union, anticipated the arguments of Daniel Webster against Calhoun. His letters to San Martín and to the urbane poet were fraternal; but he asked Santander to consult the Congress in Bogotá about possible war with Peru. And San Martín was putting the same question to his Congress in Lima.

Then San Martín, to clinch Peru's claim, sailed north for

Guayaquil. At Huanchaco, the port of Trujillo in North Peru, he was told that Bolivar was coming south with an army. San Martín was a great soldier, and he was also a decorous man; the fear of a head-on collision with his Colombian brother moved him more deeply than his political will as the Protector of Peru. He put his ship about, and returned to Lima. But he sent orders to his Colonel Santa Cruz to withdraw his troops from Sucre's, to return to Guayaquil and await further instructions.

The news of Bolivar's sailing for Guayaquil was false — as San Martín learned when he stepped off his ship at Callao. Meantime, however, his message to Santa Cruz had reached him when Sucre's army was already on the march toward Quito and Pichincha. Sucre refused to let the Peruvians go. Santa Cruz protested that his commander-in-chief was San Martín, and Sucre calmly informed him that he would have to fight his way back to Guayaquil. Santa Cruz decided to remain with Sucre. Then came the countermand from San Martín: Santa Cruz was to help free Quito. But the question of Guayaquil had grown darker.

In Popayán, Bolivar weighed plans to secure both Ecuadorian cities. Sucre advised that he ship his troops from the port of Buenaventura to Guayaquil, whence they would march together the three hundred perpendicular miles to Quito. The alternate plan astounded reason. South of Popayán were the lethal malarial valley of Patia, the savage mountains and the more savage mountaineers of Pasto, fanatic lovers of the King and haters of the Republic. By Sucre's project, Bolivar avoided Patia and Pasto; with Quito won, these royalist nests would be surrounded and forced ultimately to surrender. If Bolivar attacked head-on, he must fight disease, fanaticism, blood. Yet this was his choice. Historians explain it by the rumor that a fresh Spanish navy cruising the Pacific might take his transports if he sailed from Buenaventura. But troops from recently liberated Panama, destined to land in Buenaventura for the campaign against Pasto, by a mistake of orders sailed through to

Guayaquil, and got there safely. Bolivar's choice was partly political. Sucre, he was sure, could take Quito without him; but if Bolivar appeared in Guayaquil before Quito fell, Peru and her partisans in the port would make trouble. Yet there was more to Bolivar's motive, and it is doubtful if he understood it.

For a while, he considered not heading his troops in person, lest defeat mar his prestige. This he rejected: none but himself must bear the burden of that dread campaign. Then, to avoid it or at least lessen its cost in blood, he devised a fantastic fraud. . . .

Early in February, Santander received a letter dated Popayán, January 29:

My dear General,

Despite the statute of Panama, which came yesterday and strikes me as magnificent, I am sore troubled. . . . I cannot sleep at night with too much thinking of the enemy's new means and methods for defense. . . . My best hope is in a political scheme to win the country, the leaders, if possible the troops. My aide Medina brings you these lines; let him return carrying with conspicuous care and much noise the sealed envelopes you will give him for me and which must reach me in Patia at the end of February or the beginning of March.

The first envelope will contain a communication from the Secretary of State, informing me of official notes from Ravenga (you will set the date as late as credible) in which he tells (as of a positive but most private matter brought by a foreign agent whose name is concealed so as not to compromise him), of a Treaty between Portugal, France and England, in which they agree on an armed mediation between Spain and America, to stop the calamitous revolution; the terms of the mediation will oblige America to pay the cost of the war and compel Spain to recognize the new independent states. The Spaniards will be indemnified for their losses with ten years of privilege; the king of Portugal is the prime mover of the project; England confirms, and it is certain France will follow. This envelope will include whatever else you deem convenient. Its date will approximate that of this letter, to prepare the way for the other communications.

The second envelope will be a memorandum sent from Paris by Señor Zea, with a report dated end of November also by him, in which he announces the plans of the governments of Europe in our

favor. It will relate Señor Zea's sessions with the French Foreign Minister (you must name him . . . this is important). The conference was about armed mediation, which France approves . . . to stop the revolutionary wave that threatens Europe. Finally, the French Minister recommends constitutional principles in America, like those of Mexico, protesting however that mediation shall in no way interfere with internal affairs nor with the mechanism of our governments, the object being exclusively to bring peace to the belligerents. Zea's note and memo to be dated end of November; and he must add that the French Minister offered to send it at once to Colombia via Martinique by the French brigantine, *Le Vétérán*, about to sail from Brest. Zea's style must be carefully imitated — his praise of the French Minister, and that of the Frenchman even more . . . it must be Gallic, circumspect, aristocratic, thoroughly tinged with legitimacy and at least addicted to constitutional monarchy. Zea must say that this mediation will mother the independence of Mexico and Peru; all Europe is for us . . . prophesy the downfall of Spain's ministry and of Fernando. . . . Great care must be taken with the language to make it believable.

The third envelope must have a copy of a message from General La Torre to General Páez, dated January 14, more or less; in which La Torre asks Páez for a safe-conduct for his envoys just arrived from Spain on a mission of high importance: to draw up and sign a Treaty of peace with the government of Colombia. *I have moreover*, La Torre must write, *the satisfaction to add that I have received orders to cease hostilities and to advise your government of this*. The passports La Torre demands must have names; these you will supply . . . find out what individuals are plausible. . . . Do not forget Murgueon has just arrived and knows everyone in those parts. This is the knottiest point . . . we must name the likeliest persons; in case you cannot be sure, it is best to leave the passports in blank but this would be a serious defect. General Páez replies at once, granting everything and also armistice. A copy of this, written by his secretary, must be included together with a report expressing his great joy. The signature of Páez is easy to forge; also Zea's; these two, and that of the secretary, must be very well done.

The fourth envelope will include four or five copies of the *Gaceta* of Bogotá, with the insertion of two or three articles from the *Miscelania* of Cadiz, a daily newspaper with world news: articles on the fall of the old Ministry, the revolt of armies, bloody riots in Madrid, Morillo's death, and other similar trifles: such as the stoning of the King's Palace, La Fontana's proposal of a national Congress and a republic. For example: Riego at the head of his troops refuses to

let Fernando VII flee to Mexico; his scheme for escape, etc. . . .

The bona fide issues of the *Gaceta* must appear without these canards; only four or five copies with them must be printed, and sent to me. I'll see to it they fall into the proper hands.

The purpose of all this farce is to persuade the enemy that the game is up; that he must *treat* with us; that we must spare more sacrifice of blood while we await the arrival of the plenipotentiaries from Spain . . . meantime, I take possession of Quito and of the rest of the province (Pasto). . . .

When you give these envelopes to Medina, convince him of the truth of their good news — let him blab it all the way from Bogotá. You, Gual, Briceño, meantime, must write me letters with a thousand exaggerations of peace, troops, Europe, etc. . . . for me to show, especially to the enemy. But let them be credible. . . .

In due course, the forged documents arrived (including the false issue of the *Gaceta*, a fount of trouble for some historians) and were properly "lost" in the camps of Pasto and of Captain General Murgeon in Quito. They had no effect. Sucre was scaling the Ecuadorian Pyramid from Guayaquil, with the glory of Pichincha ahead; Bolivar's army in Patia was dying of disease and desertions.

Bolivar was now no happy warrior. The gracious city of Popayán, before the creation of the kingdom of New Granada, had administered a vast province: south to Otavalo in present Ecuador, north to the Caribbean, east to the Magdalena, west to the Pacific. As new provinces were carved, its jurisdiction dwindled to the immediate valleys. It was a university town, erudite as Bogotá, more pious than Quito. It gave great men to the cause of independence: among them Camilo Torres, President of the Federation of New Granada, and the naturalist, Francisco José Caldas¹ — both shot by Morillo. Now, Bolivar saw the city desolate. Twenty times in the past decade, its flowering valley had been ravaged by armies; the fields were jungle, the peasants were impoverished and angry. Moving down from Bogotá through Colombia's most fertile land, Bolivar had measured the republicanism of the people; and it was

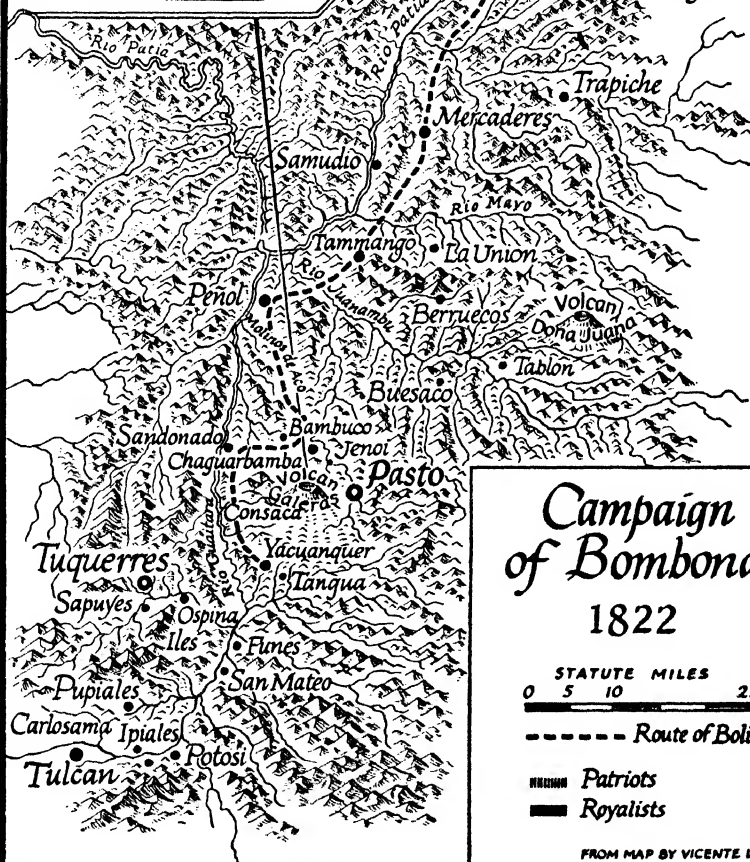
¹ It has continued to be the home of great men; for instance, Guillermo Valencia, Colombia's most perfect poet and Balmorero Sanín-Cano, South America's leading liberal essayist.

cool indeed, compared to the royalism of Pasto. Ten years of war had been enough; they had won their liberty and wanted to enjoy it: to cultivate their gardens, to recoup their fortunes. Let Pasto and Quito fight their own battles! They resented the mounting taxes; they resisted the recruiting; and Bolivar's plan for a Federation of the Andes seemed to them a pretext for a "foreign war." Moreover, Santander was too good a politician, too close to them in spirit, to force the emotion of his constituents beyond its natural limits. The period had begun in which Bolivar would have to beg, again and again, for more men, more money, more supplies; and when Vice-President Santander would clamp down the brakes of the Constitution.

But if the north was bleak, Bolivar turning south saw dreadfulness. Below Popayán the benign high valley is abruptly blocked by mountains, whence the land falls low into malarial swamp. Still farther south, it rises again to a delirium of precipitous heights; and here lived the descendants of cannibal tribes whom the Incas had never successfully absorbed. By some strange diathesis, in these mountaineers the fanaticism of their Spanish blood and the lusts of their Indian forefathers had become dominant strains. In their towns, their priests exhorted them in Christ's name to hate Bolivar; in the open country they waited with their guns, ambushed by every rock and torrent. The demoralization of these border hamlets between the Republic and Quito astounded even the man who had seen the horror of Venezuela in the years of Boves. There was no semblance of law; crime and sadism flourished like the dank growth of the forests. And the royalist commander of this chaos, Colonel Basilio García, was one of Morillo's ablest disciples.

Bolivar sent him an offer of peace; it was contemptuously ignored. Meantime, Patia, where the army camped, took its toll. The men whom malaria, dysentery, smallpox or yellow fever spared, suffered through want of proper food and became addicts of desertion. O'Leary states that as a rule in these American wars, twenty thousand raw recruits placed one thousand trained soldiers on the field of battle. Survival of ten per

Battle of Bomboná



Campaign of Bomboná 1822

STATUTE MILES
0 5 10 25

----- Route of Bolívar

~~~~~ Patriots  
——— Royalists

FROM MAP BY VICENTE LECUNA



cent from the original levies to face the enemy was considered high! To give one instance: the battalion called *Rifles* was held at the strength of six hundred; from 1818 to 1822, it had mustered twenty-two thousand men! Bolivar was living, as never before, the frightfulness of these statistics!

He issued orders that every soldier who for whatever reason strayed from his regiment be shot for desertion; that every farmer who sold or killed or even lost his cow be shot as a traitor. Then he marched south from Patia into the folds of the volcanoes, and on flimsy bridges of grass across the torrents. The enemy cut at him from a hundred hidings. He abandoned the main road which led through the dark ominous wood of Berruecos (where, eight years later, the most tragic scene of the struggle was to be enacted); the mountaineers bit at him like poisonous insects, swarming, disappearing. When he crossed the river Juanambú, his army had shrunk to twenty-two hundred men; his one chance was battle.

Vaulting the valleys and the passes, Bolivar made contact with the enemy and retreated, hoping to draw him into the open. But García, the royalist commander, formed his troops near a ranch called Bomboná. His center, above an abyss, stood in a thick forest which masked his artillery; trunks of great trees palisaded its approach. One flank depended on the Guaitara, a tumultuous stream too deep to be forded; the other stood on the protective rise of the volcano whose other side loomed over Pasto. The one approach was through the center, palisaded and armed with batteries of cannon. Bolivar made a three-pronged fork of his army and thrust forward. In half an hour, all but six of the officers and a hundred of the men in the middle prong were dead. But the attack enabled Valdés to round the volcano and charge with bayonets. The fight began at noon. After six hours, under cover of night, the royalists, abandoning their artillery, withdrew to Pasto. Bomboná was a technical victory for Bolivar. But the campaign cost him three men of every four and Pasto was intact! He retreated north, and sent envoys to arrange a truce.

Meanwhile, García had news from Quito. Sucre, reaching

the celestial valley, raced his army around its rim, manœuvred the royalists down into a flank of the volcano above the town, and while the citizens watched from their towers and terraced streets he utterly destroyed the enemy. This was the great battle of Pichincha. General Aymerich gave up his sword; Capain General Murgeon was dead; Quito was Sucre's. García did not tell Bolivar what he had learned; and so solid was the country against him that Bolivar did not know for many days. But Pichincha persuaded García; Pichincha, at least as much as Bomboná, liberated Pasto. The Spaniard insisted, however, that the President of Colombia must enter the sullen city guarded by royalist soldiers; otherwise García could not be responsible for his safety. (In less than a year, Pasto rose again, threw out the republicans and proclaimed fealty to the King.)

Of what value was the Bomboná campaign? It was Bolivar's passage of dreadful night into the day of Quito. It was an omen.

### THE CITY OF MILK-WHITE LIGHT

QUITO stands upon the pyramid of Ecuador. The pyramid's base at the west is forest, hot in the chill Pacific; at the east it sinks in the treacherous waters veining the dark wood to the Amazon. Its summit, leveled like a horizontal ladder whose snowy sides are the volcanoes (Chimborazo, Cotacachi, Pichincha, Imbabura, Itacazo, Cotopaxi . . . ) and whose rungs are the cross ranges, with an ancient town (Ibarra, Quito, Latacunga, Ambato, Riobamba, Cuenca . . . ) in each valley, lies twelve thousand feet above the sea, under the Equator's sun, in a perpetual mild twilight.

The city stands upon the Indian. Juan Montalvo, the romantic essayist of Ecuador, wrote, more than a generation after Bolivar's death:

The Indian, like his ass, is a homeless chattel at the mercy of whosoever lays hands on him. The soldier takes him to sweep his barracks and carry away his dung; the mayor sends him twenty leagues with a letter; the priest picks him up to bring water from



the stream — and all of it gratis, except for the rod on his back so he'll remember and return for more. And the Indian returns; it being his nature, when he is knocked down, ground to earth, to get up and thank his tyrant. *Diu su lu pagui, amu*: Dios se lo pague, amo: God reward you, master — while he hoists up his trousers. Innocent unhappy creature! If my pen had the gift of tears, I'd write a book, *The Indian*, would make the world weep.

But the Indian returns. In Quito, the Inca absorbed his kingdom (of Quito); Pizarro burned his city; he rebuilt it with his conquerors and absorbed them. He became the stone of great churches, the wood of melodious sculptures; he was the fire and the quake that periodically wrecked them. The Indian is the Andes. Men whose lineage is pure Spain, like Bolivar himself, are of him.

Before the thatch huts of the new city, San Francisco de Quito, were battened down, European and Indian were working wondrously together. A son of the Inca Atahualpa (whom Pizarro treacherously murdered) became the Christian foreman of the builders of the great temple of San Francisco. A disciple of Herrera, architect of the Escorial in Spain, was in Quito before 1540; Peter Gosseal, a Franciscan artist from Flanders, brought in other Flemings; from Lima came the Italian, son of Mateo Alesio, Michelangelo's disciple. And the genius of these men, employing the Indian, was subtly molded by him. The polyphonic Baroque of Spain and Rome sang a new melody. Soon Quito was exporting its creations. Every convent became a school and factory of art. Cities as far as Cartagena and Chile called on Quito for stone cutters, wood carvers, architects, painters. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, from Lima to the Atlantic they spoke of "Quito art," as the twentieth century spoke of "Detroit cars" and "Hollywood films." The town still had a frontier air, tile roofs were uncommon, but great edifices ruled the narrow streets; altars, chapter rooms, cloister walls, were plethoric to the ceilings with works of religious art which expressed a profound variant — an Indian variant not known before in either America or Europe.

In brothers who inherit discordant strains from their forefathers, the parts may cancel out. In one, they may blend to integration. This was the genius of Quito . . . of Indians and mestizos like Carlos, Gante, Legarda, Pampite, Caspicara, Vela, Goríbar, and his master Miguel de Santiago.

Santiago, the mestizo, was both painter and politician. One day, a favorite pupil posed for his "Christ in Passion"; the youth's face, remote from the Lord's anguish, exasperated Santiago who seized a lance and pierced the youth's breast. As the loved boy expired, the artist caught the expression that he wanted. But there were laws in Quito against murder, even for good cause. Santiago fled for sanctuary to the convent of San Agustín, and there he remained until he died, a generation later. He painted pictures on every wall and gallery, on the wide stone stairs, in the choir, the sacristy, the chapter room. Exposure (and neglect) have somewhat dimmed them. But their dreamlike divergence from the Baroques of Europe was there when they were new; its cause is not faded pigment but the organization and expression of the figures. The quality has a triple source: the twilight of Quito even at clear noon; the Platonic-Catholic acceptance of reality as the shadow of the Unseen Substance (the Creator more real than His creatures); and the antinomianism of the religious artist who breaks God's law, of the free man who lives imprisoned in a convent, and who solves the breach by creating a sacramental world in which Grace and human passion are distilled, aesthetically, that they may come together.

Antinomianism is lodged deep in Christian culture. The strictly ethical religions, Brahmanism, classic Buddhism, Judaism, prescribe for man's salvation arduous methods of conduct, technics for grappling with and overcoming the curse of the ego. The teaching of Jesus is an ultimate height of Jewish ethics. But Saint Paul preached a *magic* of Faith and Grace. Saint Augustine reaffirmed that works could not save; even good will was too corrupt. Platonism supplied the idealist logic. The sacramentalism of the Church neglected methodological technics for *inward* human transformation, although counter-

trends of ethical realism kept an uneasy balance. But in Spain's America, other forces came into play to encourage antinomianism. The American world was too unwieldy; the mixture of bloods blurred each traditional code of conduct; the children of Spain and America felt themselves abandoned by the bonds of either world; the laws of Spain were too remote. Hence the antinomian "I obey, but do not fulfill." The temptation was strong to create order out of chaos by transcending chaos. The art of Quito was such creation of order. Even the pale day of the tropic altitude, making the blaze of the noon sun unreal, became its ally.

But daily conduct, when exiled from the synthesis of man with God, takes revenge. Deprived of the nurture of the Whole, it grows corrupt. Soon Quito was as infamous for its morals as it was renowned for its arts. While the temples were crowded with lovely shapes and colors . . . every confessional and reredos a gem, every ceiling a symphony . . . vice was the norm for priests, nuns, burghers. Monks had their pleasure as of right with the religious women; those who resisted were often flogged and tortured till the sumptuous galleries rang with their outcries. Convents were houses of assignation, sanctuaries witnessed Lucullan feasts, Indians and Negroes had no crueller lords than the padres who had brought them the "good news" of salvation. Federico González Suárez, Bishop of Quito and Ecuador's greatest historian, was compelled to write of his own city:

A marvel was the number of monks and nuns . . . and alas! their abandon of morals was complete. Not only was there no observance of cloistral rules; even the Decalogue was neglected to the grave loss of morals and good customs. What was even more sorrowful: scandal, by being public and common, lost its character of scandal; the folk were so used to the licentious life of the monks that it no longer shocked them. Society was in ruins. Scandal had grown so great that the moral criterion, utterly warped, honored and esteemed in families what in any other part of the world would have disgraced them. Virtue was expelled from the cloisters, vice invaded the altars; never in the annals of the Church had the corruption of the religious gone so far; and indeed our monks had reached the point of taking

pride in scandal. . . . The convents opened their doors to the illegitimately born, thus sanctifying sin. They were crowded with nuns, and even more with secular women who served the nuns, and with the nuns' offspring. In such convents, not silence, not separation from the world, not meditation were possible. The monks went in to the nuns and remained for hours . . . wandering from cell to cell according to their pleasure. . . . The nuns served the monks. . . . The Jesuits were distillers of liquor, and traders in Negro slaves for the great estates. . . .

In the transluminous art of Santiago, as in the early churches, the Baroque is sobered and deepened by the somber Andean-Indian mood. But even before Santiago's death (1673), the schematic breach of value and deed was dissolving Quito's art into a profusion of lush discrete shapes. An example is the *Compañía*, the Jesuit temple which, although contemporary with Santiago, marks the norm of the next epoch. The façade is a glorified boudoir; the sculptured columns (derived from Rome and Portugal) melt writhingly upward into the carved phantasmagoric mist of pediment and portico; the encrusted figures under the roof are soft as tapestry. Within, every inch of stone and cedar is hand-tooled: motifs inspired by the Alhambra, the early Arabs in Spain, the Italian and somber Inca symbols, fuse the walls, the nave, the pulpit and the choir into a texture intricate as the archaic ferns, impalpable as perfume. The Saints of the choir, of cedar dight with gesso in colors opalescent as the moon on moving water; the high Altar's coursing columns mazed with arabesque; the Mother, Saint Joseph and the Child flowing upward toward the Father, benign and soft in the thick gold firmament, sum to a voluptuous trance. Only the symphonies of Mozart suggest a similar graciousness tinged with the melancholy knowledge that these colors and bright forms must die. But Mozart is swifter and more vital; this Quito music stands nearer its demise. Matter, here, no longer mounts to transcendence; its iridescence of detail melts into a euphory of submission.

The great sculptor of this phase was the Indian Manuel de Chili, known as Caspicara. His figures and figurines of painted cedar are consummate as those in the Cluny of Paris.

But they sing a different song. No masculine soaring of detail and mass into transcendence, as with the Gothic; no distillation of variety into the remote, strange unity of Santiago's art; Caspicara's exquisite lines *recede*, drawing the senses with them. The gestures of limb and body, the features, the folds of a mantle . . . like the physical parts of a woman . . . entice to possession. This later art of Quito, seducing order in sensory terms, might be called feminine. Woman herself may be experienced by man as both synthesis of his world and escape from its irresolutions: a lovely order within chaos.

#### MANUELA SÁENZ

WHEN BOLIVAR emerged from the dark passage of the Bomboná campaign into the day of Quito, he met the woman of first importance in his life. She was born in 1797 in a rich house of Quito's Plaza Mayor, near the Cathedral and the Palace; born in a bed of satin and velvet and fringed gold over sheets of the best Brussels linen. The mother was Doña María Joaquina de Aízpuru y Mazo, a creole lady of good standing with two estates near Quito — and unmarried. The father, a judge of the Audiencia of Quito, publicly presided over this household and another, where his wife lived with their legitimate children. Don Simón Sáenz Vergara was a native of Spain, a man of trade and "deals," typical of this latter age when both the conquistadores and the tough settlers had been succeeded by brokers and monopoly magnates.

Long past were the great Quito days; the churches and convents were all built, and stifling with art which had lost its export value. Gone also were the thatched roofs; from Pichincha or El Panecillo, the hill above the city, one looked down on the compact tile-roofed homes of seventy thousand, studded with cupolas and towers. But the town's energy was finding other forms. Two years before Manuela's birth, a mestizo of predominantly Indian blood, humbly born despite his resounding name of Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo,

was released from prison to die in a Quito hospital. Espejo's pen had given him fame wherever liberals gathered to discuss the tide of human rights rising in Europe and North America. He had worked his way through the ancient university of Quito, published the town's first radical newspaper, collected a loan library of revolutionary books, corresponded with like-minded men, visited Nariño in Bogotá, and among many pamphlets and volumes written *El Nuevo Luciano*, a mordant satire on Quito's state, church and morals.

Manuela probably read Espejo, although her favorites were Sallust and Plutarch, whom she read in the original. She spent most of her time on her mother's haciendas, riding horseback (astraddle, which was more of a scandal than her illegitimate birth), romping with the little cholos and mestizos whose parents labored on her land. She was a hoyden — more archetypical than untypical of her class.

Manuela's dearest companion was a black slave girl, named Jonatás, a few years older than she, who was to follow her through life. Jonatás was lithe, cynical and clever . . . too clever to toil in the fields. She taught her young mistress to love animals, and to practice the rebel graces which were the art of women in a world ruled by men. A great earthquake rocked the Andes from Popayán to Peru; the heights crumpled into valleys, and in Riobamba twenty thousand Christians lay buried. The survivors cried out for relief, and the President of Quito refused to send a penny. "The treasure of the King is sacred," he said. A little later, he sailed back to Spain with seventy thousand stolen pesos in his pocket. This was the kind of news Manuela learned from Jonatás. The President, of course, was a Spaniard, like her father. At intervals, Don Simón Sáenz took her to his other house to play with her half-sister and half-brothers. They formed a cruel conspiracy against her; their mother, a Spanish lady, was not pleased with this fruit of her rival, the lady of Quito. Then relations grew strained between Don Simón and Manuela's mother, who refused to receive him in her bed and sent him back to his wife. Manuela had reasons to resent her father and Spaniards.

When she was twelve, in August, 1809, the leading men of Quito . . . lawyers, doctors, landowners, a few priests, and Juan Pio Montúfar, the Marquis of Selva Alegre, met in the home of Doña Manuela Cañizares, and declared Quito free of Joseph Bonaparte, false king of Spain. The town rang with applause; the Junta met openly in the lovely chapter hall of San Agustín from whose white walls, beneath the carven cedar ceiling, the fantastic world of Santiago looked down on them. Manuela and her mother were heartily for the rebellion; the Spaniard, Don Simón Sáenz, of course, was its sworn enemy. In less than a year, the Viceroy at Lima had shipped an army up the coast; from Guayaquil it marched to Quito, and the rebels were jailed. One day, Quito learned that nearly two hundred had been shot in their cells. Don Simón emerged as one of the strong men of the King's new régime. Manuela decided that she hated her father and Spain.

She ruled her mother. She disliked jewels and perfume, wore boy's clothes when in the country, loved wild animals, and was acclimatized to violence by earthquake and revolution. Her feeling against her father's family (her half-sister Eulalia had gone to Madrid to marry a lord) rhymed with her acceptance of her loved land. She was a beautiful girl. Her hair and her enormous eyes were black flame, her skin cool and pallid, despite her hours in the air; her breasts had blossomed, and her waist was supple. It was time to send her to school in a convent. The Abbess was an aunt of her mother, and no better than most of the nuns. In this establishment, according to Manuela's chronicler, Alfonso Rumanzo González, "there was much praying, and more sinning."

The revolution seemed smothered. By slow post, the severed heads of rebels were mailed from Guayaquil, and Manuela on her promenades with the other little ladies of the convent saw them displayed in the streets as warnings, gory and putrid. Meanwhile, the convent taught her to play the clavichord, to embroider, to read her favorite historians in Latin.

It taught her what she was to call her "atheism," meaning little more than her contempt for the Church. She learned

to smoke, to adore cats, to despise submissive women, and to take the world as it was. In the north of the Presidencia, there was still fighting. A younger aunt, Josefa de Manzanas, led the royalists and was awarded a military medal. Manuela was proud of her Amazon kin, although she deplored her politics. Her mother, too identified with the rebels for safety, carried her north to Ibarra; when the fighting died with the monarchists in control, Manuela returned to her convent. At seventeen, she eloped with a handsome young officer of the King's army, Fausto D'Elhuyar. In a few weeks, she was back. Nothing is known of this little junket; perhaps the lovers quarreled over "independence." But it was clear to Doña María that her child's education was complete; time to get her married.

In normal days, the problem would have been slight; for Manuela was rich, beautiful and of good lineage; her illegitimacy was venial. But the revolt had thinned the supply of marriageable youths — except royalists, whom Manuela seemed to judge fit for an affair, not for a permanent alliance. The flamboyant girl and her mother calmly talked it over (they were great friends), and came to a rational decision. Dr. James Thorne, an English medico, highly respected, well-to-do and forty, had fallen in love with Manuela. He was above the battle: a "safe" husband. In 1817, when the girl was twenty, they were married. Thorne was an inarticulate man with an articulate wife; and there is no portrait of him, save through her eyes. But events prove that he was loyal, long-suffering, and that his passion grew to love. There were no children to subdue and anchor his wife; according to Dr. Cheyne, her physician in later years, Manuela had a structural impediment to pregnancy. But this defect merely simplified and strengthened the final form of her nature, which in any circumstance must have emerged. D'Elhuyar returned, Thorne became worried; and when he proposed to take his wife away from Quito, she gladly consented. The doctor sold his house and his lucrative practice, and the pair with their retinue of servants and household pets and goods set out on the long,



barbarous journey . . . by horse down the laddered mesetas, over the cold divides, through the gorges and the forest to Guayaquil; thence by boat to Lima.

In the blasé City of Kings, Manuela made a sensation with her outlandish costumes, her cigars and lack of modish "vapours" (she did not blush and never fainted), her salon of parrots, monkeys and an obstreperous bear whelp. The reigning beauty in the capital was Rosita Campuzano, a blue-eyed blonde from Guayaquil with the airs of late eighteenth-century Versailles. Rosita adopted Manuela as her perfect offset. She of the coast was sinuous, fragile, yielding, dissolute and devout; her friend of the Andes was brash, restless, free-thinking and chaste. When General San Martín entered Lima with his liberating army of Argentines and Chileans, Rosita became his lover. Meantime, Manuela was completing her political education. Lima liked her, but she did not like Lima. It alone of the mainland capitals, from Mexico to Buenos Aires, had had no revolution.

She told her husband she was homesick for her mother. When her father came to Lima on a business trip, she got her good Dr. Thorne's permission to go back with Don Simón to Quito. She arrived just in time to share in the welcome to Bolívar.

## TWO MEN AND A WOMAN

THE HERO whom Manuela met at the municipal ball given in his honor (a poet of Quito introduced her) was in his fortieth year, and looked fifty. There was grey in his hair and his mustache (which he soon shaved); his voice was hoarse; his leanness, after the terrors of Patia and Pasto, was taut as a bowstring. A Peruvian who saw him wrote: "Only the Arab stallion has such eyes . . . the narrow lofty brow was furrowed . . . the hard mouth of a leader, the mobile mouth of an

orator." Manuela had found her career. She possessed Bolivar.

He was still dazed by the unacknowledged shift in his life. The lyric years, which had given birth to Colombia, were over. Nostalgia for them, the refusal of his will to accept their end, was doubtless one motive for the campaign of Bomboná. Bolivar needed to prove to himself that he was still the captain. And what had the dolorous months proved? The captain was Sucre! In Pasto, on June 9, when at last he learned of Pichincha, Bolivar had written revealing words to Santander:

The victory of Bomboná is far more beautiful than that of Pichincha. The losses in both were about equal, but very unequal were the characters of the foes . . . Sucre had more troops, less enemies; the country favored him in the mood of its inhabitants and the nature of the land; whereas we fought in a hell with demons. . . . I believe that with a little delicacy much honor can be awarded to my army with no detriment to Sucre's.

This was not the banal jealousy of an older leader. Bolivar loved Sucre, openly acknowledged his gifts, constantly advanced his prestige and power; in later days of overwhelming trial, he would take time to write and publish a biography of the man whom he considered his greatest soldier. The words to Santander were the truth, brashly spoken without false sentiment. But Manuela felt the pain and weariness and conflict that allowed this truth to speak, whereas a younger Bolivar would simply have kept it to himself. Manuela's heart went out to these frailties, but it embraced his sterner duties. Very slowly, she grew in him. When he left Quito for the provinces, she did not ask to accompany him, but remained and worked for him. Bolivar's second and greatest rôle still lay ahead: the creation of a free, united America Hispana; and this now became her own passionate assignment. Legend about Manuela has been rife with both idolatry and anger. Among the less improbable items, she is accused of infidelities. Doubtless this is exaggerated; but there is no reason to suppose that during her long separations from Bolivar in the years ahead, Manuela had no other physical contacts. Her loyalty was not that of the

conventional wife or mistress. To the creative cause she loved in Bolivar, Manuela was not unfaithful.

How slow was his acceptance of her is revealed by his conduct when he went down to Guayaquil. Manuela did not go with him; and he gave himself to an idyllic friendship with a family of ladies: Doña Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón, her mother, her sisters and her daughters: all in one household. He declared himself chastely in love with both the mother and her youngest, Joaquina, whom he called "la Gloriosa"; and pursued the rôle as if there had been no Manuela Sáenz in Quito — or as if he were retreating from her exigencies to the comfort of a suffused family relation. He allowed himself to be coddled; he ate the succulent dishes the ladies prepared with their own hands and sent to his quarters; he washed in the silver bowl that came from their boudoir.

While Bolivar longed for the lyric lilt of his first phase, he was busy with the new. Peru was not yet free; although barred from Lima by San Martín, the Viceroy La Serna with a growing army occupied the rich intermediate valleys and highlands. Cuba and Puerto Rico, smothered under the bureaucracy of Spain, called for an expeditionary force to free them (this, Bolivar reluctantly abandoned because the United States opposed it). Yet with the first phase of war not complete, the creative organizing task must begin. Bolivar worked toward a plan of Federation.

Miranda had fathered it, and taught it in London to Bolivar and to Bernardo O'Higgins who, as Supreme Director of Chile, declared in 1818 for "la Confederación Americana." San Martín himself, the same year, in a message from Santiago to still royalist Lima, advised "union of Argentina, Chile and Peru." In Peru, the Argentine Bernardo Monteagudo, a friend of Bolivar, published his *"Essay on the Necessity of a General Federation of Hispano-American States and a Plan for its Organization."* Bolivar alluded to American union in 1812 in Cartagena, addressing (before he had won a battle) "the governments and peoples of America"; in 1814, triumphant in Caracas, he spoke of "the reunion of meridional America

within one body of a nation"; in 1815, exiled in Jamaica, he wrote of "an international Congress at Panama," and again in 1818 in Angostura, replying to Pueyrredón of Buenos Aires. In 1821, he consulted his Secretary of State, Pedro Gual, for immediate action, and envoys with power to sign treaties were sent to Peru, Chile, Buenos Aires and Mexico; their goal, "the formation of a truly American League by a Congress of plenipotentiaries in Panama." The news of Panama's rising against Spain moved Bolivar at once to send his trusted Colonel O'Leary north with an army, to secure the Isthmus which he destined to be the American Federal District, the site of the inter-American Canal and the seat of a Hemisphere Congress.

Meanwhile, the inward situation continued insecure. Coro had again turned royalist; Puerto Cabello, still Spanish, threatened all Venezuela — so sorely that Vice-President Soublette considered the evacuation of Caracas. Bolivar sent swift orders to hold on, and proposed a plan to Páez and Santander for raising and feeding a fresh army. His program was vetoed as costing too much money, too many cattle. And here at hand was the dangerous conflict with San Martín and Peru over Guayaquil.

All this, with her whole nature — impetuous, generous, strong — Manuela possessed, when her arms held Bolivar and when he was away.

She loved him for what he was, and for his noble world. Far more dubious was Bolivar's feeling for Manuela; he could enter and possess her only in so far as *he* was in her.

But Bolivar loved Sucre. There is a portrait, painted in 1824 (perhaps by the same Peruvian "primitive," José Gil de Castro, whose portrait of Bolivar, the subject considered his most faithful likeness) which reveals with clumsy naïveté the pure lips, serene brow, strong Roman nose and devout eyes of Sucre. A draughtsman's compass on the map of Venezuela, pointed from Caracas, would touch two almost equidistant cities, southwest and east, San Fernando de Apure and Cumaná: the first, the capital of Páez, child of America's chaos;

the second, the birthplace of Sucre in whom there was no chaos at all. Sucre was the *ideal* Christian medieval knight (not the *real* who like the Cid was rascal, mercenary, lecher); he was the legendary Amadis de Gaul, the Bayard *sans peur et sans reproche*. Páez and Sucre: Venezuela produced these rich antitheses.<sup>2</sup> Bolivar, born between them, loved them both. But the character of Páez, feline-fierce and treacherous, held Bolivar off; the intellectual and moral precision of Sucre won him wholly. Bolivar was capable of deep family devotion. He respected and loved his strong sister, María Antonia; he was fond of the younger Juanica, fair and less strong, and of his nephew Fernando, the dull son of his dead brother. These family ties are the paradigms of his love for Sucre. From Quito onward, Bolivar speaks often of Sucre as "his son." Colombia and the Federation of the Andes, when his creative work was done, would need a "perfect gentle knight" to guide through the coming dangerous generation: Sucre would be that leader. But the love of father for son is not simple; hope, self-projection, are in it, and also jealousy, frustration. Bolivar acknowledged the superiorities of Sucre, who seemed to him a clearer and a better man than himself. But at times Sucre's purity and devotion exasperated him; even his youth. The letter to Santander after Bomboná points to this ambivalence of a father's love; as does Bolivar's odd little slip in his biography, which gave Sucre's birth year as 1790 instead of 1795. He made Sucre five years older; as if part of him could not bear achievement in so young a man! What had Bolivar been and done, when he was thirty?

Psychological subtlety was not one of Sucre's virtues; his mind, simple as mathematics and engineering, could not hear the dark undertones of Bolivar's affection and of his own response. Alluding to the legendary love of the citizens of Guayaquil for Bolivar whom they had not yet seen, Sucre wrote to Santander: "I do not know what emotion compels me to love this man in a degree as excessive as it is inexplicable."

<sup>2</sup> Venezuela also produced, in the same epoch, Andrés Bello, America Hispana's most influential classical scholar, and Simón Rodríguez, the complete romantic.

Before the Pasto campaign, Bolivar had written to the President of the "free city" of Guayaquil, Olmedo, whom he respected as a poet:

. . . it hurts me to wound a friend I love. I refer to my communications to the Government [of Guayaquil] and to General Sucre. By them you will learn that I demand the immediate recognition of Colombia; for the present state of Guayaquil is sheer nonsense. And for me to come there, while it continues, would be an outrage to me and a lesion of the rights of the Republic of Colombia.

You must know, dear friend, that a city with a river cannot make a nation; that such an anomaly would merely furnish a battlefield for the two contiguous warlike powers. You know the sacrifices we have made in the midst of our own troubles to aid Guayaquil; that Colombia has sent troops to defend it, while Peru has begged reinforcements for herself. Quito cannot live without the port of Guayaquil — nor Cuenca nor Loja. All the relations of Guayaquil are with Colombia. Tumbes is the natural limit of Peru; nature has given Guayaquil to us.

All that the broadest equity grants a people within a union is free complete representation in the national assembly. Any other claim is contrary to social rights. . . . I am determined not to come to Guayaquil until the flag of Colombia is unfurled, and I count on you to exert the influence of your merit, dignity and wisdom. . . .

Olmedo had declined the mailed fist gloved in friendship; Guayaquil was still "independent," still firm in its prerogative to join or not to join any greater political unit.

San Martín had written to Bolivar on March 3, expressing "pain" at Bolivar's apriori claim on the port. The decision, he said, must be left with the people; Bolivar's glory and his was to give them the chance to be free. This letter Bolivar received in the hell of Patia, before the assault on Pasto. He had a respectable excuse for not replying. Now, after his talks with Sucre in Quito, came his answer.

Exmo. Señor Protector of Peru,  
Don José de San Martín.

Your Excellency regrets my intimation to the province of Guayaquil that it fulfill its duties. I do not think, as you, that the vote of a province is valid on national sovereignty, for it is not the parts but the whole of a people, which deliberates in general assembly.

. . . The Constitution of Colombia gives the province of Guayaquil the most perfect representation, and all the peoples of Colombia, including Caracas, cradle of liberty, feel themselves sufficiently honored by exercising the same sacred right of deliberation.

Your Excellency has done well, in accord with your name and glory, not to intervene in Guayaquil, as you assure me, but in the problems of the continental war. The government of Colombia has followed the same course as you; but finally, no longer able to tolerate the spirit of faction which delays the success of the war and threatens all South Colombia with disorder, it has resolved no longer to permit the existence of the anti-constitutional Junta, which is a scourge of the people of Guayaquil, not the organ of its will. Perhaps Your Excellency has not been impartially informed of the conflicts in the province, incited by a dozen ambitious men who wish to rule it. I will give one instance . . . unable to get a plurality in certain elections, they freed the convicts of Guayaquil Penitentiary so as to win by their votes. I doubt if the history of late Rome reveals a worse scandal.

I thank Your Excellency for the candor of your note, which I reciprocate. Indeed, the swords of the liberators must be employed only for the people's rights. I assure you, my sword has had no object but to gain the territorial integrity of Colombia, bring the people the widest freedom, and defend them at once against tyranny and anarchy. To this end, the army has fought under my command. . . .

Your Excellency merits the thanks of Colombia for disapproving the provisional independence of Guayaquil: in politics, an absurdity; in war a challenge between Peru and Colombia. I do not believe Guayaquil has the right to ask Colombia for permission to express its will about incorporation in the Republic; nevertheless, I shall consult the people because it is worthy of limitless consideration from Colombia, and because I wish the world to see that no people of Colombia demurs from obeying its wise laws.

But, politics aside, Your Excellency with the generous and noble tone which corresponds with the chief of a great nation affirms that our first embrace will seal the union of our States, which no obstacle shall ever mar. This magnanimous conduct by the Protector of Peru was what I desired. It is not the interest of a little province which shall disturb the majestic march of Meridional America, whose vision, united in heart, interest and glory, is fixed — not on the petty blemishes of revolution — but on the vista of remote centuries, of free and happy and devoted generations. . . .

The interview you offer me is my most impatient desire; I await it with confidence. . . .

**BOLIVAR**

Meanwhile, events crowded. The victory of Pichincha and now Bolívar's presence in Quito roused the pro-Colombians of Guayaquil; the pro-Peruvians took to the streets against them; the Junta of three, striving to steer toward Peru, were tossed like a cork on a riptide. On June 19, they convened the Electoral College to decide the issue; and set the opening for July 28. Why these thirty-eight intervening days of dangerous ferment? July 28 was the first anniversary of Peru's formal independence: a gala occasion for the pro-Peruvians. And thirty-eight days were time enough for San Martín to reach Guayaquil. But time enough also for Bolívar!

In Lima, San Martín had written to Bolívar — long before the Quito letter could reach him, but possibly after he had learned from the Junta the date for the opening of the Electoral College:

Before the 18th [of July] I shall sail from Callao, and no sooner disembarked in Guayaquil I shall hasten to salute you in Quito. My heart fills with joy, when I contemplate that moment; we shall see each other, and I predict America will not forget the day we embrace. . . .

Behind the cordial words, there glints a cool suggestion: *that Bolívar remain in Quito.*

San Martín did not wait for the eighteenth; perhaps he learned, after setting the date for his departure, the exact time for the opening of the Electoral College; perhaps the assurance of Olmedo and other friends that the citizens of the port were for annexation to Peru made him feel he should be there. Bartolomé Mitre, Argentine statesman, partisan of his fellow countryman, author of the standard *Historia de San Martín*, writes:

San Martín sent the Peruvian fleet ahead on the pretext of receiving the Peruvian-Argentine division [of Santa Cruz] which was to come down from Quito and embark at Guayaquil. With the city thus covered by land and by sea, the Protector counted on command of the province, to ensure the citizens' free vote and perhaps incline it in favor of Peru.



On July 14, he sailed from Callao. His sloop-of-war, *Macedonia*, sped with the cool current, and in eleven days, on July 25, hove to near the isle of Puná at the mouth of Guayaquil harbor.

José de San Martín was forty-four . . . five years Bolívar's senior. He was born in Misiones, a northern territory of what is now Argentina, and when he was still a child, returned with his parents, both Spaniards, to Madrid. At eleven, he was a cadet in a regiment of Murcia. During the next twenty years, he rose to be lieutenant colonel, a slow ascent; in 1811, he retired; in 1812 he offered his sword as a professional soldier to the free United Provinces of Rio de la Plata. He was a Mason, therefore inclined to be hostile to both the Spanish monarchy and its Church; his revolutionary spirit went little farther. After years of issueless fighting in the north of Argentina and High Peru, he got permission to retire to Mendoza, and created the brilliant army which scaled the Andes of Chile and won the battles of Chacabuco and Maipu. With the help of Chile's army and the ships of Admiral Lord Cochrane, he invaded South Peru, defeated the Spaniards again, and liberated Lima. The Spanish viceroy, José de La Serna, had retreated intact to the mountains, where he and his force could hold on forever — unless they were rooted out. San Martín was a tall, cool man, an orderly man, an American gentleman of the classic Spanish school. The chaos of America was not in him, and he distrusted it. The dashing improvisations of Bolívar, the soldier, both horrified and fascinated him; Bolívar, the poet of republican dreams, left him cold. The new nations, in his judgment, needed first of all to be free of Spain's armies: this was his business as a soldier. Then they needed to be transformed into conservative, constitutional states; this, he was quite sure, should be the business of kings, carefully chosen from the Royal families of Europe. But he did not insist; if the nations wanted presidents instead of monarchs, so be it. San Martín had two passions: his daughter, Mercedes, whom he had left years before in Buenos Aires, in order to pursue his second passion of military honor. He did not hate Spain or the Spaniards; he

hated only confusion. Therefore, he soon hated Peru which he had freed. The social and ethnic quicksands of Lima, the self-indulgence, the flowers, the music, the grandiloquent luxury and rhetoric, invaded and tortured San Martín.

For causes that will be clear, Lima was the one mainland capital of Spain's kingdoms that did not rise in 1810. But as the news of great events converged: from the north Boyacá, Carabobo, Pichincha; from the south, San Martín's great victories in Chile, the people swirled in long-confined excitement. Trujillo, infected by neighboring Guayaquil, revolted against Spain; other towns . . . among them Huaylas, Cerro de Pasto, Nazca (seat of one of the most exquisite pre-Inca cultures) had uprisings. And when La Serna cleverly abandoned Lima for the safer highlands, and San Martín marched in, the city received him with hysterical fervor, and literally forced him to assume dictatorial power. His enemies called him "el rey José"; when his friends and sycophants seriously spoke of crowning him King, he thrust them angrily into jail. He was a mild monarchist, but not for himself. His essentially conservative, unimaginative nature moved him to rely on the leaders he found: the professional bureaucrats of the *ancien régime* and their masters, lords of the rich Peruvian earth and of the enslaved dark peoples. Imperceptibly, the most corrupt and clever ruling caste of the American Spains captured the simple, stoic soldier.

San Martín had rationalisations for his presence now in the harbor of Guayaquil: its citizens, he had been told, wanted to join Peru; and what could its fate be with Colombia, while Colombia was led by a meteor, a comet? The true motive was his need to strengthen his favor with the ruling class of Peru by absorbing their instinctive policies of expansion. Despite his glory, San Martín was insecure: Buenos Aires disliked him, resented his far-flung triumphs; and Lima he knew to be a quicksand. San Martín felt at home in a camp (with less intelligence, he might have been a martinet), over a cozy card table with a few friends, with his child — or in Europe. But war duty in America plunged one into politics; the chaotic

land had not yet matured to the point where civil order separates from military force. The immersion made San Martín unhappy, and he wanted to be done with it. Again and again, in Lima, he expressed his longing "to go home." He'd finish his task . . . whip the Spaniards in the mountains, then quit. He'd take his beloved child and sail back to Europe.

## THE INTERVIEW

As THE *Macedonia* rounded the island of Puná within the *ria* of Guayaquil, a frigate of the Peruvian navy in full sail was making for the sea; the ships spoke, and soon San Martín found himself in the presence of a group of outraged men: Olmedo, his colleagues of the triumvirate Junta, the Peruvian minister at the port and the Peruvian General LaMar. They were "escaping" to Lima. While San Martín's proud mouth grew taut, they told him what had occurred in Guayaquil.

Two weeks before, at the head of three thousand veterans, Bolivar had ridden into the city: an armed invasion, although the sword was in the scabbard. Partisans of Colombia and Peru manifested in the streets; flags were run up and pulled down; the city was a cauldron. Whereupon Bolivar formally took Guayaquil "under Colombia's protection" and raised his national colors on the public buildings. But he would abide, he said, by the votes of the Electoral College on July 28 "lest any man say that a single Colombian fails to love his country and to respect its laws." It was *un fait accompli*, the gentlemen told San Martín: Guayaquil was Colombian.

"Why?" he asked. "If the people are with us . . . if the Electoral College can vote freely. . . ."

The people, Olmedo admitted, were now with Bolivar.

San Martín turned pale. "You have misled me," he muttered.

Olmedo had perhaps been misled by his own preconceptions. He was of a not uncommon type of gentleman in America Hispana. Educated in Lima, hating the Church (in his famous

Ode to Bolivar, two years later, the verse that compared it to "the scourge of Mahomet" was suppressed), he loved the classics, translated Pope's *Essay on Man*, and read the novels of Samuel Richardson. He had been a deputy to the liberal Cortes of 1812 in Cadiz; and dreamed of Guayaquil as a new free Athens on the Pacific. He met Bolivar with coldness, not expecting much of a son of "rude" Caracas; but Bolivar's genuine respect for the poet had won him, although Olmedo declined to countenance the virtual "conquest" by remaining in the city.

San Martín stood stunned on the deck. He had lost the match for Guayaquil. What was there now to discuss? he might as well sail back to Lima. The signed treaty between Colombia and Peru guaranteed Bolivar's sending whatever troops San Martín needed for the final campaign against La Serna. And before he sailed, he had read Bolivar's *oficio* that the Colombian war was over and his army available for duty in Peru; in fact, a first contingent was on its way and four thousand more men awaited transport. San Martín was sure of the campaign against La Serna. Better take his injured pride away with him to Lima. . . .

An aide of Bolivar was introduced, and handed him a letter.

Exmo. Señor Protector of Peru,

This very instant we have had the gratefully surprising news of your arrival in the waters of Guayaquil. My satisfaction is troubled only by the lack of time to prepare the minimal reception due to the hero of the South, to the Protector of Peru. I am not even certain that the news of your being here is correct; for we have had no official notice. I take the liberty of sending you my aide, Colonel Torres, to greet you on my behalf and to beg of you to inform us when you will honor us in the city. I am eager for an interview which should contribute in great measure to the well-being of South America; I make no mention of my personal desire for friendship with the father of Chile and Peru.

At once, after Bolivar despatched this note, came news of San Martín's meeting with Olmedo and his angry colleagues; and

the rumor that San Martín was sailing back to Lima. Bolívar wrote a second letter, hurried but carefully worded:

. . . It would hurt me more than the loss of many battles, should you not proceed to this city. Surely you will not disappoint my anxious wish to welcome on Colombian soil the first friend of my heart and of my country! How could you possibly come from so far and leave us without giving us the chance of having with us here in Guayaquil the extraordinary man whom we all hope to know and to embrace. Most respected friend, it is not possible! I await you here; or shall meet you wherever you wish. But I must insist that you honor us in this city. A few hours might suffice for a parley between soldiers; but they cannot satisfy our need to know the man we have loved thus far only through his fame. . . .

San Martín knew he was cornered. Had Bolívar been an enemy or a stranger, the situation was simple. But here was hurt to his pride, challenge to his honor as an American soldier; ambiguity he had no experience or code to cope with. Olmedo's frigate sailed on to Lima; San Martín, burdened with a difficulty of another kind than crossing the Andes with an army, sailed in to Guayaquil.

The liberator of southern South America, the viceregal "Protector of Peru," was welcomed with all the pomp and warmth Bolívar could muster at such short notice. The two men conferred twice without witnesses: the first time, for thirty minutes; the second time, for five hours. A banquet was held and a great ball, from which San Martín with his staff stole silently away, accompanied by Bolívar, to their ship. San Martín had been in Guayaquil just forty hours.

What was said? what took place beneath the words, at the two unwitnessed meetings? For twenty-one years, the more reliable historians found no mystery. San Martín, returning at once to Lima where he could speak with his authorities in person, wrote no official report; but Bolívar made three, all dated Guayaquil, July 29, 1822: the first, the official report by his secretary to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Bogotá; the second, a similar account to the *Intendente* of the Province of

Quito; the third, a letter of four folio pages written in his own hand to Santander. Later communications to Sucre and others corroborate fully the itemized details of the three reports:

1. San Martín disguised his nervousness or discomfort in "frivolous, ill-considered phrases." He complained of the "headaches" of governing and about his colleagues in Peru; wondered if Bolívar was being suffocated by the intrigues ("horseplay") of Guayaquil, as he in Lima.

2. "Spontaneously, without being asked," San Martín declared he had nothing to say about Guayaquil; it was none of his business; the fault was with the citizens. Bolívar replied that he was carefully complying with San Martín's wish that the *people* be consulted: on the twenty-eighth, the Electoral College would vote; it faithfully represented the popular Assembly. The subject shifted to military matters and to Colombia's expeditionary force about to sail south.

3. San Martín returned to the pains of governing. He wanted to go back to Mendoza (the provincial city in western Argentina where he had created his great army). He had left a sealed envelope in Lima, resigning his office of Protector. As soon as he had won a "first battle" he would leave the command, not even waiting for the war's end. (He had no doubt of its happy ending). But first he would place the government of Peru on a firm foundation. Peru could not be democratic; some Prince from Europe should assume the throne. Bolívar said that royalty was alien to America: he would oppose monarchy, although not interfere with any nation's free choice. San Martín said the problem could be settled later; he felt a King to be necessary; in Lima, there was a swarm of lawyers who wanted a republic. He spoke disparagingly of the intellectuals. Again he stressed his distaste for power.

4. San Martín applauded the idea of a federation of states; Chile would approve; not anarchic La Plata. He was for the federation of Colombia and Peru (Guayaquil would be an admirable capital), even if no other state joined. Recruits from

either nation should make up losses of either army.

5. San Martín said the problem of frontiers (between Colombia and Peru) would cause no difficulty. He was not empowered to discuss it; his visit was without military or political purpose. He did not wish to discuss formally the military aid offered by Colombia; it would be indelicate at the moment.

6. They talked casually about La Plata, Chile, Mexico; San Martín knew little of Mexico; showed no interest. But he had full confidence in O'Higgins of Chile. Buenos Aires moved slowly toward order and was republican in spirit.

7. "San Martín thinks the enemy (in Peru) is weaker than he; the chiefs (Viceroy La Serna, Generals Canterac, Valdés *et al.*) although audacious and enterprising, are not very formidable." He planned an immediate campaign, on land and sea. Let Bolivar ask what he needs of Peru: he will say Yes, Yes, to all; and he is sure Colombia will do likewise with Peru's petitions.

8. Three Colombian battalions have already embarked for Peru. Bolivar urged San Martín to wait for more. . . .

In his letter to Santander, Bolivar included personal impressions. He said he was well pleased, having won the south of Colombia (Quito and Guayaquil), the friendship of Peru and San Martín. "His character strikes me as very military, extremely active, not at all heavy." He believed San Martín had in mind to assure himself of Colombia's co-operation. San Martín, said Bolivar, was more optimistic than he about his present power; Bolivar feared he might start his campaign prematurely, relying on his army of eleven thousand well-trained men without waiting for at least four thousand more Colombians. (La Serna's army at the time was about nine thousand.)

According to unverified reports of friends, Bolivar later speculated rashly about San Martín's motives. Had he come to sound out Bolivar on the question of a Peruvian king? had voluptuous Lima, "City of Kings," perhaps nourished a secret ambition in the General of a Crown for himself? There is no

good evidence that Bolivar asked these questions; but it is certain that San Martín heard the malicious gossip, which enraged him.

### THE LEGEND

SAN MARTÍN had sailed back at once to Lima. Before he got there, he learned that his cabinet, headed by the able Montegudo, had been overthrown. This was the final blow to his pride and to his spirit. He convened the Assembly and resigned. Despite the pleas of all Lima, despite the delegations of men and of ladies who came imploring to his villa of Magdalena, he refused to change his decision. He returned to Buenos Aires; gathered up his daughter (her mother had died) and sailed away for Europe. There, as the Peruvian scene darkened, letters from friends began to arrive, upbraiding him for "abandoning" America. General LaMar formed a new government in Lima. Within a year, incompetence and corruption had squandered the tentative social order set up by San Martín. His splendid army without its creator attacked La Serna, and was defeated, demoralized, dispersed. Peru fell into chaos. Now, in the light of all this, San Martín's departure seemed a defection, almost a betrayal. The national pride of Argentina rankled. As the years passed, the need grew to make a unique hero of San Martín . . . thereby to hide the national guilt of his country's neglect of its great man. It became imperative to find a motive for San Martín's withdrawal which would exalt him and denigrate Bolivar, his rival for continental honors. Rumor, slander, wild surmise, began to flourish; and were nurtured not only by the psychological need but as well by the circumstance of the Guayaquil meeting: the fact that the talks had no witness, that the official reports were not yet published — and by the characters of the two men: Bolivar, arrogant and wilful; San Martín, quiet and retiring.

In 1843 a volume appeared in Paris which crystallized the



two decades of guess and whisper. It was the second of *Voyages autour du Monde*, whose author, G. Lafond de Lurcy, had been an officer of the Peruvian navy during the Protectorship of San Martín. Lafond published for the first time an alleged letter from San Martín to Bolívar, dated Lima, August 29, 1822: a letter never found before or since, in original or in copy, in the archives of either. It refers entirely to the then recent conversations in Guayaquil. San Martín had pleaded for troops, it implies, knowing the mortal dangers that faced his army in Peru; Bolívar refused to send more than eighteen hundred. San Martín pleaded that Bolívar come down, at the head of his own army, and offered to serve under him. Bolívar refused, saying he could never command San Martín; and he doubted if his government in Bogotá would grant him permission to leave Colombian soil. Wherefore, the letter concludes, San Martín has decided to withdraw . . . to leave the field open and alone to Bolívar, since this was Bolívar's manifest wish and the sole means of assuring for Peru the help it mortally needed.

The letter was irresistible; it explained and supplied everything for those who would stage a match between San Martín and Bolívar, with victory for the Argentinian. Mitre, in his *Historia de San Martín*, takes the letter's authenticity for granted; as have succeeding generations. Forged letters were common weapons in the political scimmages of early republican America Hispana: distance and the lack of communication encouraged them. Any investigator not overwhelmed by a passionate will-to-believe should have felt doubt about this paper whose original was never seen; but since the analysis of Vicente Lecuna, first methodical historian of Bolívar, doubt is banished. The relevant documents which Lecuna has gathered and applied prove that the Lafond letter is fiction.

It contains statements of fact, false at the time and which San Martín could not have made: as that La Serna's army was nineteen thousand — a figure it did not attain until two years later. It ignores specific treaty agreements between Colombia and Peru: an ignorance conceivable in the forger, not in San

Martín. It convicts Bolívar of brazen mendacity in his three official reports: this is imaginable but not likely. The forger did not know that Bolívar's *urgent offer* of more troops than Peru finally accepted was published in the press of Lima, while San Martín was still there; and in the press of Buenos Aires, when San Martín arrived. If the offer was false, stultified by what Bolívar said at Guayaquil, San Martín must have exposed the deception in order to explain the alleged motive of his conduct. It contradicts contemporary letters in which San Martín assures his friends that he has troops enough for victory, as he assured Bolívar. As Lecuna brilliantly reveals, the psychological structure of the letter is absurd — and far from complimentary to San Martín. If he found Bolívar such a fatal egoist, why submit to him? would this not have been weakness, rather than nobility? Why, if he knew the poor quality of Peru's officers, should he endanger his own army and Peru by resigning? And why, if he needed reinforcements and Bolívar refused them, did he not turn to O'Higgins, his friend in Chile, and to Buenos Aires — as he had done before, insistently and successfully, despite his countrymen's reluctance?

The Lafond letter was false <sup>3</sup> . . . but far too useful not to be believed. At last, San Martín — old, embittered by his voluntary exile; longing in France for the call that never came: the call of an America so pure and whole that he could not refuse — San Martín himself believed it! When, after he had left, ruin darkened Peru, Bolívar's enemies who feared Bolívar's coming wrote poisonous words to San Martín: he must return to save Peru from a nefarious plot long incubated by the Venezuelan. Surely San Martín felt guilt or at least doubt in his sudden leaving; unconsciously sought to excuse it. A correspondent told him that Bolívar himself had spread the report that San Martín had gone to Guayaquil to win his consent

<sup>3</sup> Only the French "translation," published by Lafond, exists. He claims to have received it with other documents from San Martín, who was living in France; and to have returned them with these words: "They are your Letters of Nobility for your children, which they must precious preserve." Surely San Martín would have jealously preserved this letter! But no original copy was found.

to San Martín's becoming King of Peru — and the unhappy exile swallowed the lie. Not to hate himself, he began to hate Bolívar. In 1846, the greatest Argentinian of the next generation, Domingo F. Sarmiento, future President of the Republic, visited the old man of sixty-eight in his home at Grand Bourg, a suburb of Paris. In 1867, Sarmiento wrote his recollection of those talks, twenty-one years old, about a meeting forty-five years old. San Martín, according to Sarmiento, spoke bitterly of Bolívar (Sarmiento doubted the sureness of San Martín's memory; perhaps he should also have doubted his own). Bolívar, San Martín told Sarmiento, not once during their five hours' talk looked him in the eye; Bolívar was arrogant; Bolívar was a dwarf, not reaching San Martín's chest! Thus legend feeds on its own substance.<sup>4</sup>

## THE FAILURE

THE LAFOND version of what Bolívar and San Martín said, one to the other, is untrue. But it does not follow that the reports of Bolívar, although factually honest, told the whole truth. To take his bare account at its face value would be as futile as to take the falsehood. From the facts: the authentic letters

<sup>4</sup> In 1940, the Lafond fiction found a new form: a book signed by Eduardo L. Colombres Marmol, ex-Ambassador of Argentina in Peru, with the title: *San Martín and Bolívar in the Guayaquil Interview, in the Light of Newly Discovered Definitive Documents* — (the documents supposedly found in the archives of a noted historian of Lima). The author of the book is not the ex-Ambassador, who was duped by his eagerness to "serve" his national hero into lending his name. The ten letters (all in support of the Lafond theme, but with embellishments, such as Sucre's giving credit for the victory of Avacucho (1824) to the military genius of San Martín) — six by Bolívar, two by San Martín, two by Sucre — are forgeries. The reader interested in the detective work that proves them false will find the details in Vicente Lecuna's *La Entrevista de Guayaquil: Restablecimiento de la Verdad Historica* (Academia Nacional de la Historia de Venezuela, Caracas, 1948). Lecuna's proofs are historical, graphological, orthographical, linguistic, and chemical. The signatures, for instance, are exact tracings from one genuine signature; the paper postdates the proper years; the "secretaries" who wrote the Bolívar and San Martín epistles are one and the same man! — and by another strange coincidence wrote no other letters for either Bolívar or San Martín. The book had great success, particularly in Argentina. As I write this footnote, I learn from Dr. Vicente Lecuna in Caracas that the building in Buenos Aires, occupied by the publisher of his book exposing the forgeries, has been attacked and burned by a nationalist mob!

and reports, from the subsequent conduct of the two men, and from an understanding of their characters, the reality of the meeting may be drawn.

Both men were there in good faith. San Martín believed in his own interpretation of the Guayaquil problem; Bolívar in his. The will of both, transcending the moment, their nations, even the cause of independence, was to help create an American world. This common ground might have matrixed their talks. But each was engrossed in his own mood, which held him apart. San Martín came, hurt and exacerbated, from Peru. His "frivolous" jests about Lima might have revealed to one far less intuitive than Bolívar a proud man's mask of anguish. And here he was, the compulsory "honored guest" of Bolívar who had just worsted him in a sharp contest. Bolívar's every word of praise was salt in an open wound, and Bolívar was equipped to know this. Could the Northerner not see his deep discouragement? If he meant (as he must) what he said of San Martín's value to their common cause, could he not foresee the threat of San Martín's withdrawal? know his grim responsibility to prevent it? Chaos had wounded the meticulous man of order. And here before him, triumphant, was the genius of chaos. What did Bolívar do to assuage the Argentinian's injured pride, his fear and his distrust?

San Martín believed in his own remedy for America Hispana's needs: the stable government of constitutional monarchy which alone in his judgment could ensure against the chaos and immaturities of the people. About the *condition* of America, they agreed. But Bolívar accepted the chaos, loving within it the challenge of an ordered New World to emerge slowly from it; San Martín was for swift, rational conquest of the chaos, because he inwardly despised and feared it. San Martín felt his own solution rebuked by the greater adventurousness of Bolívar. This was a crux of their discord, even deeper than the contest over Guayaquil; this the germ of San Martín's developing resentment. A moment of true candor would have bridged the abyss. But what would that candor have revealed in each to himself and to the other? Bolívar's conviction that

he, he alone, as life-president of a vast federation could solve America's chaos; and San Martín's secret refusal of Bolivar because he contained a world generous and dangerous and deep beyond San Martín's reach.

Bolivar was threatened by the euphoric blindness of victory; and surely San Martín saw it. San Martín, thousands of miles away from his own country, whose political cabals had constantly irked and badgered him, fresh from Peru whose treacherous condition none had foreseen so lucidly as Bolivar, faced the victor of Quito and Guayaquil, the undisputed leader of the nation he had created; but if this gave Bolivar the position to lead, it also exposed him to peril; and San Martín knew it.

Of course, Bolivar did not openly hint (the Lafond version) that San Martín leave the field to him. Such crassitude was not Bolivar's; if it had been, San Martín would surely have been moved to remain, rather than abandon the field to such arrogance. But for years, Bolivar had dreamed of leading an army to Peru and Potosí. At the moment, his mind could not tell him how this could be, but his heart had its own prophetic language; and San Martín, a sensitive man, may well have got its message. What did Bolivar do to counteract it? What did San Martín do to make Bolivar know its danger?

*The two men did not help each other.* And both needed help. Their need of one another was real as America's need of the qualities of each. Twelve years of war in Argentina, Chile, Peru — twelve years of politics which he detested, of chaos which he feared, had spent San Martín; at forty-four his nerves were thin, his will was ready for the masked suicide he committed when suddenly he gave up his great task and withdrew to the slow death of exile in Europe. Yet his steadfastness, if he had taken Bolivar fraternally by the hand, would have been strengthened by — and would have calmed — the passion of Bolivar.

They were extraordinary men, propelled from the chaos of their world to perform deeds great with that world's torrential power. But they were both young men — young as the free America they dreamed of; immature men in an America whose

future greatness and present immaturity they embodied. Their individual disharmonies, which they could not penetrate to common ground, foreshadow the strife of the American century beyond them. In their personal failure to be brothers, their America failed.

Before the chaos of Peru and the violent will he felt in Bolívar, San Martín abdicated. This was his sin. Because he had sinned against America and could not face his sin, he grew warped, bitter, finally false in Europe.

Bolívar's sin was greater, in that his victories, his genius, were greater. And his peril would soon be greater. . . .

## I X

### The Conquest of Peru

"I consider the New World a hemisphere gone mad, whose frenzied inhabitants in order to contain the tides of delirium and crime place a madhouse-guard in their midst, with book in hand to make them hear their duty."

"The Congress of Panama, an institution which would be admirable if it were effective, is nothing but the mad Greek who thought he could guide the ships on the sea from a rock on the shore."

"The freedom of the world depends on the health of America."

#### Q U I C K S A N D S

THE INCAS called their realm Tahuantin-suyu: Quechua for "the four quarters of the earth." The north quarter, Cunti-suyu, reached what is now Colombia; Kolla-suyu, the south, embraced present Bolivia and the highlands of North Chile and Argentina; Chinchay-suyu fell west to the sea; Anti-suyu, east of the Andes, was the jungle — "the Mother" — because the Quechuas had come up from its dark forest westward into the birth of the high, cool valleys.

The Indian nations south of the Caribbean are a gamut whose complexity proves the richness of the race. On the desert peninsula of Guajira, between Lake Maracaibo and the ice of Santa Marta, live the Motilones, a Carib tribe, indomitably savage, who to this day recognize no republic, nurse their one art of war, and shoot the white man on sight. Their neighbors of the lower Magdalena are their antithesis: soft, shallow, fanciful, with arts pretentiously self-conscious. In the embrace of the Magdalena with the Cauca, west to the Pacific, are the Chocos, the Calimas, the Taronas and Quimbayas: pro-

ducers of chromatic textiles and exquisite ceramics, master-smiths of gold: a subtle and lush folk, but not deep, not strong. Eastward, the Chibchas, sedate, phlegmatic, unlyrical, unvisionary, but enduring: strong to withstand the brilliant Quechuas of Peru, but not to rival them. Southward, the world grew dark. In the valleys near Pasto, malarial troughs beneath cataracting and volcanic mountains, lived eaters of human flesh, whom the elixir of Spanish blood made fanatics for Church and King, the fiercest foes of Nariño, Bolivar and Sucre. Yet not far to the east remain the stone relicts of what was perhaps the first, perhaps the deepest culture of the continent.

For want of any clue, it is named "San Agustín," after the village at the heart of the region . . . four thousand square miles . . . where, in the past decades, hundreds of statues have been unearthed. Near are the river Páez, the lofty gorges of the upper Magdalena hirsute with the giant American bamboo, the scarlet cambulo and gualanday; eastward, the waters of Caquetá feed the Amazon. It is a land hard-won from jungle, and the creators of the statues came from jungle, like the great cats which enter their vision of man (human heads have jaguar teeth and pointed ears). They were builders in ephemeral wood, except for their ceremonial sculpture, their huge ornate baths and the tombs that, carefully drained, have preserved their mummies; and their wood cities are gone without trace. But the range of their consciousness endures, recorded.

The more monumental forms, five times the height of a man, are of gods. Some figures are objective renderings of a vision; others are stylized to abstraction: the ears and hands, for example, enter the plane of the body; a bird or frog is elongated with economy of detail, as in the work of Brancusi and Lipschitz, to symbolize motion rather than represent a moving body. Still others are realistic, like the classic Greeks or Maillol. For instance, the immense portrait of a man with wide-crowned hat, necklace, and folded hands, looks down, benevolent, pitying, doubtful of the uses of benevolence and pity. The features of one individual convey a wisdom humanly involved but god-



like. Another expresses hate so burning that all sentiment seems consumed by it. As in the great classic arts of Europe, the natural becomes symbol, the particular becomes the universal. But in other statues, the stylization into a design of angle and mass is rigorous, as with the Cubists.

These variant visions suggest successive ages, but they have been found side by side in a single mound of earth. At the edge of a vale descending from the village of San Agustín, three small figures lay under the mulch of countless forest generations, close together: a nubile girl, fragrant, fragile, faithfully modeled to life; a man's head, whose still knowledgeable features are abstracted into a pattern of planes; between these, a third figure, utterly dehumanized, like a hieroglyph. An analogy (barring the impossible notion of a museum!) would be Le Nain, Fragonard and Braque painting portraits together in one season. In many of the statues, the head is crowned by a smaller head — the astral double-ego, an explicit metaphysic. Some of the faces are aggressive with ferocity: coiled features potent as a dynamo. In the form of what appears to be a pregnant goddess, the ferocity is defensive: hands clasped on the gravid belly ward off a world of horror, while the face, in the fury of mouth and feline fangs, is horror itself. The eyes, in the context of the features, are expressive: a virtue rare in sculpture. Near the baths, whose color, phantasmagoria of forms and phallic figures, suggest a luxury like Rome's, a great frog sits in a niche of a cliff. Its body and legs are a delight of lyric motion, but its head is sinister as venom. Not far are the huge figure of an owl with the head of a serpent in its mouth, the tail clasped by its clawing feet — all rendered in one disc-shaped plane; the triangular immense head of a man with square eyes; and an enormous god in one plane, arms flush to the face, the arms' curve harmonic to the sickle-shaped eyes and mouth.

The divergent idioms of these stones speak one word; reveal one great experience. *exposure*: the bewilderment, anguish, ecstasy, awakening fear, of *first exposure to conscious life*. After the night of instinct, the agony of willed action; after the night of

the womb, the lesion of the sun. A people emerge from the Forest. The emergence is physical: clearing trees and underbrush; the emergence is psychic: awareness of self and the non-self. Before the Forest, the dim forefathers of this people had perhaps lived elsewhere . . . perhaps on another continent . . . in knowledge that they were men; and lost the knowledge and even its memory in the Forest night. Perhaps this waking is a re-emergence; the ecstasy of dawn fraught with the almost unbearable anguish of trying to recall and to place the self, *again*: whence the virtuosity of the expression. But they still live on the brink, still within the shadow of the jungle night, and of the dark coil of animal existence. They look *out* upon human destiny; and what they see gives them terror. Also, it gives them pride. For in this dawning light, *they know their darkness*. They have knowledge of being weak, of being helpless, of not-knowing; this gives them fear. They have knowledge of the formidable world, and *of their knowledge of it*; this brings the sense of power, which is cruelty and pride, and the cue for wisdom. They are afraid, but they can play with what menaces . . . shape it in stone! They know the terror of being men; and they grow arrogant in knowing.

All this, in the sculpture of a buried American people. Whoever they were, and of whatever time, they emerged to the mere threshold of their day blazing upon them still enthralled in darkness. It appears they could go no farther forth; or perhaps a terrestrial catastrophe, such as is hinted in the ruins of Tiahuanacu, stopped them forever. The emotion of their art is the ecstatic discovery of light. They peer toward it; they peer at their own peering; they refine, variate, sophisticate, the emotion — and lose it. They crumble with their wooden houses, back into the Forest. Perhaps, before they vanished from the light within them, they sent it southward to engraft the first cultures of Peru: Tiahuanacu on Lake Titicaca, Chavin on the Pacific.

The Empire of the Incas, who were a caste within the Quechuas, was a third stage in Peru's history, and it was four

centuries old and dissolving when Spain stamped it out. The Incas absorbed a dozen states, each with its capital city and its culture. The autonomy of these states was the second or middle period of Peru, and lasted at least eight centuries. Its remains, in architecture, the arts, household utensils, mummies (among them are skillfully trepanned skulls and stigmata of syphilis), reveal a way of life in the ruling classes that was refined, colorful and soft. Sexual perversion was common and celebrated in exquisite ceramics. But before these urbane centers flourished with their many reminders of the archaic Mediterranean cities, there were at least ten centuries of the culture known as "Megalithic" because of the huge stones of the buildings. In the ruins of Tiahuanacu for instance (on Lake Titicaca), single rocks heavy as a modern locomotive were quarried many miles from the temple site and finely fitted into one another. Obviously, therefore, the Megalithic period of Peru was not a beginning; we call it archaic and "first," because it lies as far back as we can peer. It covered the land from height to coast with terraced cities: Wari, Pukara, Chavin, in the high valleys; Chongoyape, Aija, on the intermediate warm levels; Supe, Ancon, Parakas, close to the sea.

The Peruvian Pacific rolls north in a cool current past an almost constant desert veined by steep valleys, each with its verdant stream, its town or village, and between them the sterile sands rising to rock. The two main ranges of the Peruvian Andes come momentarily together in a titanic coil at Cuzco and Cerro de Pasco; but for the length of the land they form a valley which lesser ranges subdivide into parallel valleys also running north and south, which in turn are multitudinously broken by ravines (*quebradas*) into a maze of isolated vales or pampas topped by towering rock and finally by snow. Despite this labyrinth, the land rises eastward in crudely regular tiers. Therefore the warmer intermediate valleys are toward the sea: the richest lands, good for cotton, sweet potato and innumerable fruits and tubers. Eastward, the highest valleys and pampas are called *Puna*: bleak lands, good only for the grazing llama and alpaca; for corn, cassava, wheat, only when terraced

and irrigated with a skill which the Quechua agriculturists perfected. Farther east beyond the rim of the Cordillera, the land falls more swift; this is the *Yunga*, home of coca, quinine and the hard jungle woods. All the valley walls are mineral; for centuries, before the Spaniards and since, they have yielded gold and copper. In High Peru (now Bolivia), there are mountains of silver and tin, lakes of asphalt; and as the Andes fall into jungle, the immemorial trees stand upon lakes of oil that may bring war — unless men first become human.

The cities of this world, like those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, have outlived cultures and tongues. Modern Peruvian towns, such as Arequipa, Huancayo, Cajamarca, were centers of the Inca system. Cuzco and La Paz, on the lofty *Puna*, were capitals of the Quechua and the Colla; and the stone streets still speak their languages. On the coast, the ports for steamers and airplanes are near ruined cities that flourished and crumbled in that air blent of cool salt and hot sun, long before the Incas led their hardy troops down from the *Puna*. (Another proof that the millennial story of Peru began in the east, in the "Mother-Forest," is that these coast people, skilled in agriculture, mining, surgery and the arts, never progressed in navigation.)

Under the Incas, Pachacama, the Sun, was worshiped; but behind him lived the invisible God who created the sun and was too remote from man for ceremonial cults. The archaic mountain folk adored the rock; each group had its sacred stone, *huaca*; and the rigid face of man and woman looked like the rock; their bodies like the rock endured the hard life. Over the Cordillera at the east came the rains in thunder and lightning, flashing down savage as the jaguar; and their rain-god was the jaguar, *Wira-kaha*. This beast-god of storm could not reach the rainless coast; but the armies of the Inca came down and spread south, till they were stopped by Chile's stubborn Araucana. The Inca way of conquest, like so much in their system, sounds ominously modern: for a period of years, the army camped at the frontier of the nation it desired, and by intrigue and propaganda strove to absorb it into the

world's "four quarters." Only if the "peaceful" penetration failed, did the armies march in.

The topography of Peru is a permanent imbalance. The Cordillera weighs too heavily upon the coast. Down comes its pressure, undermining the friable low valleys; and the sands send their disintegrant vibrations upward into the highland dwellers. Under the Incas, for a few centuries, order was imposed upon the people, an order whose rigor compensated for instability. The individual of the Indian world had never matured into the *person* with the Judaeo-Christian meaning of one in whom the values of society and God are focused. The clan (*ayllu*) merged the individual into itself; to it, not to him, belonged the permanent, the real. The unit of wholeness in the *ayllu* was at first territorial: a particular valley. The communism of the Incas lent itself to this psychology. It absorbed the *ayllu*; and when this failed, it uprooted the *ayllu*, sending it hundreds of miles away where it would live as ordered. (There are still such *ayllus*, transplanted from Peru, grafted as far afield as Ecuador, speaking Quechua, revealing the long-extinct will of the Incas, as a star sends its glow through the lightyears after it is dead.) The Inca system was a plan minutely surveying every human action. Hours of labor were allotted to the family, the indigent widow and orphan, the *ayllu*, the army, the priesthood, the Incas who were the *ayllu* of the Sun. Priests and sages were shifted periodically to the farms, to prevent the rise of a bureaucratic caste. There was no want, no intellectual doubt; disorder was pathologic sacrilege, dissidence was obscene. Long before the Conquest, the Quechua and Aymara peoples, principal actors in the regimented peace, were psychologically repressed, but this too was rationally solved: there were holidays for getting drunk and for overindulgence in the narcotic coca leaf; there were outlets for violence, military and dramatic.

The Spaniards, had they been able to live up to their theocracy, might have won a perfect victory in Peru: the cult of the Sun and the Sun's family, the Incas, might have been trans-

mutated into the cult of Church and King; the "four quarters of earth," into global Christendom. In less than a generation, the masters had bitterly disillusioned their subjects. The public servants of the Incas, the "party men" who apportioned work days and feast days, rationed food, shaped communication, were sober, impersonal, austere — and of the same culture as the people. The Spaniards were mad for gold (to the Peruvians a metal of less use than copper), mad for women, mad for land (although they never worked it). And they were perpetually afraid — of their God, of their servants, of each other. No sooner had they broken the Empire than they began to fight among themselves. Their egos, explosive with atomic power because of their faith that God was in each one, had blasted Tahuantinsuyu more effectively than gun and horse; but were incomprehensible to the integers of the ayllu. They were private entrepreneurs, an inconceivable category to the Indian mind. They prayed to a Prince of Peace, and lived by violence. Sullen, confused, hidden, became the men and women of the Peruvian valleys.

For a few years, there were simply the conquered and the conquistadores. Soon, there were mestizos. Then the Negroes came, and in lust and love mingled their bloods. Peru was a tangle of race and caste to match the political and telluric chaos. The mestizo character, *the condition of suspended conflict*, suffused the country, irrespective of the blood of the inhabitants: a white man in Lima, an Indian in the Puna, would feel, think, act, as a mestizo. The imbalance of Peru became its balance.

The compulsion to order is irresistible in man. The "order" of Quito was its arts, exploiting the Baroque principle of dissolution; and its antinomian religion. In New Granada, the urge to integrate the creole, the unmalleable Chibcha of the north, the atavistic tribes of the south, produced a split; each character withdrew — the ruling white class into an aloof refinement. This schizoid nature of New Granada had its symbol in the three great ranges of the Granadan Andes, running the

length of the land and splitting it; its historic archetype in Santander. In Venezuela, there was less distance between the creole culture and the untamed plains and jungles; hence osmosis and to a degree fusion between them. This was furthered by the cultural immaturity of the Indians: not strong enough for spiritual and intellectual resistance like the Indians of the Inca Empire, yet too strong to be wiped out like the pampa tribes of Argentina (and the plainsmen of the North American prairie), the Indians of Venezuela suffused their character into the conquerors. Not by accident did Simón Rodríguez take his pupil into the savannahs south of San Mateo. The primordial spirit of the land was fluid and the intellectuals absorbed it; they were not split off as in New Granada; yet the Jungle and the River were so strong that no aesthetic order could issue, as in Quito.

In Peru, none of these attempts at order could succeed; too overwhelming was the disrupting force, symbolized in the top-heavy Cordillera bearing down on the unstable sands of the sea. In the thirty years that followed the last Inca revolt (1780), two trends enveloped Peru. The Indians and mestizos of the Sierras sank into ever deeper sullen depression; the Spanish court in Lima reaffirmed its hold by wooing the creole aristocracy. Peru was an amalgam of rich and vast estates whose owners (many with Spanish titles) had been taught by the revolt of Tupac Amaru that Spain was their best defender. In Mexico, Caracas, Bogotá, Santiago, Buenos Aires, the creoles felt themselves thwarted and oppressed by Madrid; *not in Lima*. The city, built eight miles off the coast and remote from Peru's rich valleys as an "escape" from the perpetual threat of the demotic centers, became a bed of conservative corruption. The cafés and theaters equaled those of Madrid; the newspapers were as urbane and narrow; society was as brilliant. The Peruvian Inquisition was a political weapon, naked as the secret police of Stalin's Russia. The one churchly power that challenged the Metropolis . . . the Jesuits with their autonomous missions . . . had been thrust from the Continent, their millions of acres absorbed by the aristocrats. All this summed, not to

organic order, but to an uneasy tincture of oppression that ate deep into the souls of men and women. Pleasure was the drug and the life-medium of Lima; *to please* was the technique of the ruling class. The city had none of the virile tragic power of Mexico, its sole rival in wealth. Lima was suave, subtle, smilingly treacherous. Unlike the cat, it purred while it sank its claws into the victim.

This was the Peru San Martín had declared "independent," and that finally exhausted him; such were the men . . . land-owners, lawyers, cynical prelates, with whom he had tried to establish order, and to whom he abandoned the country.

### C O L L A P S E

WHEN San Martín withdrew, a Junta of three, headed by General LaMar, replaced him. Part of San Martín's carefully trained army sailed south, commanded by the Peruvian General Alvarado. Disaster began with the voyage against the north-running current and the adverse winds; the food gave out, and when the half-starved men landed at Arica hoping to be fed, the peasants had withdrawn into the mountains with all their cattle. The royalists swooped down, and at Moquegua, San Martín's once proud army was broken. The bad news demoralized Lima and gave the rivals of the Junta their pretext. LaMar was imprisoned, the Junta was dissolved; General Santa Cruz and his men marched into the Congress with swords drawn, and waited while the Congress, pretending it was free, elected Riva Agüero President—the first President of the Republic of Peru.

Joseph de la Riva Agüero Monte Alegre Aulestia was as typical a product of creole America as Bolívar. He was born in Lima the same year as Bolívar, and like him of aristocratic blood: his father had been a high judge in Mexico, his mother was the daughter of a Marquis. Like Bolívar, he studied in Madrid and caught the modish spirit of French liberalism. He wrote an essay on American independence, published in



Buenos Aires (the Lima presses touched no such heresy); and as Mayor of Lima, he collaborated with San Martín. He was clever, charming, a true "democratic boss" of the mestizo masses of the city. His chief coadjutor was Santa Cruz, born in the hot Yunga east of La Paz, son of a noble Corregidor and an Aymara woman. This partnership of the pureblood scion and the mestizo reveals the psychological ground of the mestizo nature.

President Riva Agüero sent a spokesman to Bolívar in Quito to ask for troops in accord with the treaty, and to invite Bolívar to Peru. The envoy crossed Bolívar's on the way to announce that the Colombian divisions were ready — twice as many as Peru had asked for. In reply to the invitation, Bolívar said: "If the Congress of Colombia does not oppose my absence, I shall have the honor of being a soldier of the American army united on Peruvian soil." An envoy with a similar mission went to Chile, and crossed the representative of the new government which had replaced O'Higgins, promising men, money and ships — these to be federalized "for the duration." Only from Buenos Aires came an unpleasant note: Argentina had signed an armistice with Spain, a virtual separate peace that opened commerce between sovereign nations: Argentina had lost interest in the war, since the victory of Maipu removed the threat of invasion; the Pacific struggle of Colombia, Peru and Chile meant nothing, trade with Europe meant much, to Buenos Aires. The news was a bitter dose of reality to Bolívar, already planning his American Union at Panama.

But if the morning of Riva Agüero's power seemed sunny, almost at once it clouded over. The Congress that elected him . . . men of his own class: landowners, high-ranking priests, lawyers, soldiers . . . was soon quarreling about Bolívar. The President was writing letters urging him to come, but in studiously vague terms; and at the same time intriguing in Congress against a specific invitation. On Riva Agüero's side were Santa Cruz, the remaining Argentine officers brought in by San Martín, and the nationalists who wanted Peru freed by Peruvians. Opposed were the Chilean officers, the angry friends

of the deposed Junta, and the simple patriots who thought Bolivar, on his record, the best available man to finish the long-drawn-out and bloody business with the Spaniards. The dispute would have been normal, if the President had not muddled it by pretending to be on both sides; at first, both sides claimed him, and finally both turned against him.

This was the situation in May, 1823, when Sucre got to Lima. He came as Colombia's ambassador, and to lead the arriving Colombian divisions. He was received as the hero of Pichincha and offered the command of all the armed forces in the country. He refused, confining his responsibility to Colombia's troops. Of course he had no civil power in Peru, but soon he was deep in the quarrel between the President and the Congress. Sucre's moral authority as the voice of the Liberator, the head of the unbeaten Colombian army, was great; his political skill was not slight. He acted from a single motive: *Bolivar must come. Bolivar was the one man competent to clear and free Peru.* Since Riva Agüero was the impediment to Bolivar's coming, Sucre opposed Riva Agüero; since he recognized the Congress as the best ally of his motive, he strengthened it against the man it had elected. Either clear alternative might still have saved Riva Agüero: to support the coming of Bolivar or to insist openly against it. For there were arguments, and good ones against it: Bolivar was suspect of being dictatorial; he was already a disintegrant force in the weak social fabric of Peru. But Riva Agüero could do nothing entirely or simply.

In the confusion of these months, while Bolivar waited in Quito, Sucre's conduct proves one point beyond cavil: *Bolivar wanted and intended to take command in Peru.* Sucre's wish that Bolivar come, would not have been enough to make him act as he did, without Bolivar's approval. Sucre knew also that Bolivar was needed in Colombia; that the "peace" there was more dangerous than the armies of the King. Pasto, since Bolivar took it, had revolted twice and might rebel again. Venezuela germinated trouble. If Bolivar had tried to convince his best-loved general that he *must* remain in Colombia; if he had insisted that Sucre himself *must* organize the armies in Peru

(which had been offered him) and head the Peruvian campaign, Sucre would not have done as he did; — and what the result might have been lies outside the scope of history. The characters of the historic play acted in character, as character — which is destiny — demanded. Sucre worked *to create the situation* into which Bolivar must come as the sole alternative to chaos. He soon found plenty of chaos to assist him.

Canterac, chief General of the Viceroy La Serna, came down from the mountains. Santa Cruz had already sailed south with his army to repeat — successfully, he hoped — the campaign that had ended in the disaster of Moquegua. Santa Cruz went without Colombian soldiers; these were to follow in a flank movement under Sucre. But before Sucre could move, Canterac was at the gates of Lima; Sucre, the President, the Congress, the entire government, and the army escaped to Callao. Riva Agüero was blamed. Sucre fortified the disgust of the Congress, which in anger deposed its President.

But Riva Agüero refused to be deposed. He declared the Congress dissolved, and with a loyal rump fled north to Trujillo, where he set up a new capital, a new congress. The one in Callao (with the Spaniards eight miles away in Lima, and Santa Cruz vanished in the south) now offered Sucre dictatorial powers, which Sucre again declined. He would accept command of the troops in Callao and administer the city for the emergency, if it were declared a camp and theater of war. The logic of this was clear, and premised on Bolivar: if Sucre accepted full powers in Peru, it would be awkward for Bolivar to come down. The frantic Congress hurried a delegation, headed by Olmedo, to Bolivar; he must save Peru.

Meanwhile, Riva Agüero in Trujillo was singing a variety of songs. He wrote to Bolivar, still vaguely urging him to come. He wrote to San Martín (who had not yet sailed from Buenos Aires for France) to return and save Peru from both the Spaniards and Bolivar. He opened negotiations with the Spanish Viceroy in Cuzco.

Canterac did not remain in Lima; it was far safer and more comfortable in the mountains, with their plenty of food and

*men. He returned, taking with him a tribute of a half-million pesos and all the city's arsenal of arms. The Congress returned to Lima and elected a new chief of State: José Bernardo de Tagle, Marquis of Torre Tagle. Now Peru had two Presidents, two Congresses. And Viceroy La Serna with his able generals . . . Canterac in the north, Valdés in the south, Olañeta in High Peru . . . built up his forces (except for the officers and cavalry, almost entirely tough Peruvian Indians) to thirty thousand: a formidable weapon, far outnumbering the scattered independents.*

Now Sucre, following the dialectic of his motive (to bring Bolivar to Peru), shifted his support from Torre Tagle (whom he distrusted) and from the Congress in Lima (he remained in Callao), back to Riva Agüero. For it was clear to him that if Torre Tagle won control of the whole country he would impede Bolivar's coming. Riva Agüero in the north must therefore be kept going. What Sucre did not know . . . nor Bolivar, for several dangerous months . . . was that Riva Agüero, having been cruelly snubbed by San Martín,<sup>1</sup> was raising an army of his own in the rich valley of Jauja, fifty miles from Canterac, and perfecting plans with La Serna to join forces with Spain to drive the independents from Peru.

Finally, after long debate, the Bogotá Congress had granted permission to Bolivar to go to Peru: he could command the expeditionary force sent in accord with the treaty, and must return to Colombia at once when the national peril was past. Opposition to his going had many themes. Some feared for Colombia if Bolivar left. Some feared for South American democracy if the Liberator grew too great in conquest. Santander, among others, doubted if the wealth of the young state could sustain Bolivar's continental dream. Colombia as yet

<sup>1</sup> San Martín's reply (which he never sent) to the invitation of Riva Agüero, his old lieutenant in Lima, to return to Peru, reveals his bitter mood. " . . . How could you imagine that the services of General San Martín would ever be engaged for the benefit of an individual — much less one so despicable as yourself! You say you are going to head an army in Huaraz; will there be a single officer capable of serving against his country, and above all, of taking orders from a scoundrel like yourself? Impossible! And enough! A rascal should waste no more of the time of a man of honor."

hardly existed: its provinces from Venezuela to Guayaquil stored the immaturities, the disorders, the regional and racial conflicts, of all their pasts. And what economy it had, the decade of wars had disrupted. The nation needed peace, a loan from England, schools, roads, bridges, international trade. Yet Santander could not deny that Bolivar's insistence was valid. If Peru remained Spanish, Colombia was not safe; the war would soon shift to the Colombian mountains. Letters from Bolivar had poured into Santander's office: demands for troops and more troops, funds and more funds. Bolivar created an electric field of irresistible tension; and the fact that Santander saw the justice of Bolivar's arguments did not make him like them. His was the "dirty work" (he too had been a soldier!), while President Bolivar, who hated offices and finance, added to his glory!

On September 1, 1823, Bolivar sailed into Callao harbor. President Torre Tagle and all the pomp and rhetoric of Peru were there. Between two solid lines of soldiers, Bolivar rode the eight miles to kingly Lima, whose flowered streets and ebullient folk: Indian, Caucasian, African, Asiatic, merged color and mood, structure and rhythm, to hide confusion in excitement. The following day, the Congress proclaimed that Bolivar was there because "the sovereign power of Peru had solicited his personal aid to defend the nation's freedom." He was granted unlimited discretionary powers in pursuit of his task; and urged, as a first move, to deal with Riva Agüero. But Bolivar wanted no civil war. He sent a warm letter to the intriguing gentleman in Trujillo, promising him peace with honor if he would recognize the Lima Congress. Sucre, meanwhile, was ordered south to "co-operate" with Santa Cruz. He obeyed, of course, but skeptically. The less they relied on Peru, he told his chief, the more chance they had to win a battle.

Torre Tagle was profuse in praise and gift. He presented his guest with a seven-volume work on the politics of Napoleon, a survey of the United States, and a set of Toledan razors. But Bolivar soon learned that every detail of the administration

was neglected. For instance: Peru had engaged to pay and to feed the allied soldiers, but the Colombians had received no wage and were living on half-rations. And what had become of the army of Santa Cruz? Bolivar did not know that Riva Agüero had instructed Santa Cruz to avoid contact with Sucre, to avoid battle with the Spaniards, and at a signal to come back and help the army of Spain drive Bolivar from Peru. Santa Cruz obeyed Riva Agüero for his own reasons: he dreamed of the crown of the Incas on his own Aymara head; he was not eager to share his glory with Sucre. He went into High Peru; ran into the royalist army at the ford of the River Desaguadero where he could easily have destroyed it, hastily retreated in order not to fight — and his forces dwindled away in the steep, bleak Puna. Meanwhile, Sucre waited in vain for word of him in Arequipa, whose inhabitants hated the Venezuelan as if he were an invader.

Now at last, through intercepted letters, Bolivar learned of the treason of Riva Agüero, who had signed a pact with La Serna. Its fifth article read:

Very secret. The Government agrees to despatch the ancillary troops in Lima and Callao; and if the commander of these troops resists, then in concert the Spanish and Peruvian armies will oblige them by force to evacuate the country, in which there no longer exists the motive for which they were called.

In plain words, this meant that Riva Agüero, "the Government," promised to help La Serna throw Bolivar — and all the patriots — out of Peru. The treasonous deal was made on September 6, a few days after Bolivar's arrival. Two weeks before, Riva Agüero had again warmly invited Bolivar to come. Three weeks later, he was urging San Martín to change his mind and return, in order to drive the Spaniards out! Such triple-dealing belongs to the realm of pathology, not ethics.

Bolivar acted at once, by sending a division into the valley between Riva Agüero and the Spanish force under Canterac. The group of Peruvian officers, who had borne messages be-

tween Trujillo and La Serna in the innocent belief that an honorable armistice was making, went back to Riva Agüero and arrested him. They would have shot him, but Bolivar insisted that he be placed on a boat and shipped to Guayaquil.

Bolivar stifled in Lima, and moved north, taking the Colombians in Callao with him. The instinctive act of prescience was timely. For Torre Tagle, the other President of the Republic of Peru, had also secretly capitulated to La Serna and was about to seize Bolivar. The Argentine force, left in Callao when Bolivar withdrew his Colombians, mutinied: they had received no pay. The Spanish prisoners were freed, and Callao, port of Lima, again flew the King's flag. Now Torre Tagle openly revealed himself. He, the Vice-President, the Cabinet and most of the Congress, declared fealty to Spain. The few Peruvian leaders, such as Hipólito Unanue and José Sánchez Carrión, who remained faithful to the extinct Republic, fled from the city. The Spaniards rode in — this time, they were sure, to stay; and the crowds which a few weeks earlier had cheered Bolivar, welcomed the King's General. Marquis Torre Tagle delivered an oration of abuse for the Colombian "monster" (his word), and of gratitude for the benison of the King. A Spanish fleet with a fresh army was on its way, he promised.

Bolivar was working his way north, studying the land, waiting for Sucre to hurry back from Arequipa. He was in Pativilca, a huddle of miserable huts about a hundred miles north of Lima in a lean valley ensphered by the sands of Peru. Here he learned the treason of Torre Tagle.

Bolivar had not actually known that the administrative neglect of Torre Tagle was sabotage; yet he had prophesied. When the treason of Riva Agüero was unmasked, Bolivar had written:

"... The altar still stands, only the idol has been overthrown, leaving the place free for a successor. It is the altar that must be broken."

Before he could move on from Pativilca, Bolivar was prostrate with fever. . . .

## N A D I R

IN A BODY like Bolivar's, thought and feeling are integral with blood; spiritual conflict becomes disease. The years since the true birth on the way to Curaçao had been an equilibrium of powers held to fragile accord by swiftness — as speed helps an acrobat to keep his balance. Now for some time the realities of his world, even more than the huge discharge of his energies, had brought a slowing: the antitheses in his will and values swerved into discord. Bolivar was sick. Unless his will and deed fused again, he would cease to be Bolivar.

The conflicts were obvious. From Quito, he wrote to Santander that he hoped soon to return to Bogotá:

. . . Find me a villa, where I can live soberly as a sick man must; furnish it with the best that can be procured . . . china and glassware and everything needed for entertaining a few friends. . . . I'll have no grand reception. I'll arrive by night to escape ceremony and spend one day at the Presidential Palace lest anyone think that my retirement to the villa is a sign of disrespect. . . .

He continues:

. . . I'll arrive in bad condition, for the way is long [from Quito to Bogotá would not have seemed long to the man of Boyacá] and I am worn out with cares that do not let me sleep, as well as with physical ailments. For I am old, and without endurance. Believe me, I have seldom had so many worries. . . . I cannot sleep, striving to guess on which rock the ship of Colombia will crash, with me at the tiller — and posterity looking on. . . .

At the same time, he was preparing to go . . . not north to Bogotá, but south to Lima; not into retirement, but to what he knew must be his bitterest battle, within and against the quicksands of Peru.

Even the terms of his antitheses were involved. To other friends he wrote of his retreat, not to a villa in Bogotá, but to Caracas, his old home. Let them find one, where they can talk and fish together! And his confession to Santander that he is



sick and finished is not merely the honest expression of a mood; it is also shrewd propitiation of Santander's lust for power: an appeal for help with notice that soon he will no longer need it.

Bolívar's relationship with Manuela demanded his living at high pitch, both as hero and as man. This too he resisted. His sentimental "family" flirtation with the Garaicoa ladies of Guayaquil was the escape from Manuela — the "north" of retirement against the "south" of Peru. These dames asked nothing of him but to coddle and adore him; *La Gloriosa* was the virginal "Princesse lointaine" of the medieval troubadours: never to be confronted, never to be embraced. Here is a sample of his letters, this one from Cuenca, the lyrical colonial town near Guayaquil:

My most lovable ladies,

*La Gloriosa* has blessed me with a greeting from you all — a satisfaction for my heart I did not dare expect . . . ungrateful wretch that I am, writing to no one, out of indolence and also out of too much business.

Tell *La Gloriosa* the mountains hereabouts have pleased me much, although I have not yet seen them; tell her not to be jealous of them as she says, for why should she be, of individuals so modest that they hide from the sight of the first soldier who comes along?

The Church has taken command of me: I live in a chapel, nuns feed me, canons give me to drink. *Te Deums* are my song and my lullaby as I meditate the beauties Providence has granted me in Guayaquil and the modesty of mountains that, for fear of sinning, desire to be seen by no one. In brief, friends, my life is all spirit and when you see me again I shall have become an angel.

No time for more, but to say I am the humble servant of the Ladies; the Garaicoas, the Llagunos, the Calderons."

BOLIVAR

"P.S. Tell *La Gloriosa*, I am the most useless of lovers."

His nostalgic tenderness flowed over; this was the period in which his friends and relatives in Caracas received letters that might have been pages of a romantic novel by Richardson or Rousseau. Meanwhile, in Peru, a balance sheet of *facts* stared him in the face. . . .

*Debit*

1. Both Presidents of Peru gone over to the Spaniards, with most of their officials.
2. Lima lost; Callao lost by Argentine mutiny and Peruvian treachery; all Peru Spanish again, except Trujillo and the immediate valleys occupied by his troops.
3. The army of Santa Cruz vanished in the thin air of the Andes.
4. Buenos Aires and all the Provinces of La Plata in a separate peace with Spain; indifferent to the American Union which the Panama Congress was to implement.
5. Chile, bankrupt, distrustful, withdrawn. (Chile had had a great leader, O'Higgins, who shared the continental vision. Because of this . . . because he was the friend of men like Bolivar and San Martín, Chile had overthrown him. The Chilean expeditionary force, sent by him, landed in South Peru, learned of the disaster of Santa Cruz, and sailed back to Chile.)
6. San Martín in voluntary exile from America.
7. Colombia a patchwork of tangential egoisms; all provinces bankrupt, all sullen, all captained in his absence by "little nation" men: Santander in Bogotá, Páez in Caracas, Flores in Quito.
8. In the fertile intermediate valleys of Peru, Viceroy La Serna and his three generals, Canterac, Valdés, Olañeta, had formed an army of *Peruvians* — the sons and grandsons of the Indians who under Tupac Amaru II had rebelled against their Viceroy. His successor had now given them (— to fight freedom) the discipline and the technics they lacked when they fought to be free. On the church wall of every hamlet of the land was a poster: *The only Enemy to Peace now in Peru is BOLIVAR*. How had his teacher, Simón Rodríguez, put it? "Those who have justice on their side, alas! have also ignorance." Ignorant Peru! How could he bring it justice?
9. And unfortunate Spain! After the liberal revolution of 1821, Bolivar had hopes of a negotiated peace. La Serna himself was an appointee of the liberal government, and Bolivar had sent him feelers for an armistice. Now the liberals in Spain had again fallen. Black Fernando VII with his Inquisition and his feudal lords was obliterating every act of the liberal constitution. Bolivar wrote: "Now we must expect only blood and fire from La Serna."

He lay on his truckle bed in Pativilca. The army surgeon said vaguely: Fever. With modern equipment and the X-ray, he might have said: Tuberculosis. Truest of all, Bolivar was

fighting for his life because he was fighting these *debit* items. What did he have to balance them?

### *Credit*

1. *Sucre*. Bolivar had said to him: "You are the man of wars, I am the man of difficulties." Sucre, he knew, would hold his army intact, its morale high. Sucre, he knew, would somehow get from Arequipa to the coast, would find ships, would soon be with him, if he lived.
2. The remnant patriots in the Lima Congress, before they ran for dear life, had performed a final act; they suspended the Presidency left vacant by the treasons of Torre Tagle and Riva Agüero, and named Bolivar "Dictator of the Republic of Peru." Word of this reached Bolivar in his fever, and delighted him. "A charming last bouquet," he cried. As chief of a nonexistent republic in Angostura, he had made a speech outlining laws and American projects beyond Peru. Now, from his sickbed, he issued a Proclamation to the citizens of a Republic betrayed and murdered.

PERUVIANS: The conditions facing your country are frightful. You know. But do not despair of the Republic. It is dying, but not yet dead. Colombia's army is intact and invincible. Ten thousand more Colombians are coming. What more do you need for hope?

PERUVIANS: In five months, you have suffered five betrayals. But against one and a half million enemies, there are still fourteen million Americans ready to shield you. Justice is on your side; and when one fights with Justice, Fortune concedes the victory.

3. Bolivar's will. And integral with his will, as it was integral with his body, although it probably did not occur to Bolivar in these terms as he fought his lonely battle:
4. His love of America . . . his true love of *his* America; and his knowledge, still sound (when it died, he would die), that America's destiny was to be free; free not only of purulent kings; free of ignorance; free to learn to become free.

For two weeks, Bolivar fought for his life. His convalescence was a slow incoming tide of all his capacities. Now he calmly fought his problem. To Santander went demands for troops and supplies. To Sucre (on his way!) went arguments on tactics and strategy. Sucre, to ward off the threat of an invasion

of Quito, wanted to attack the Spaniards in the north, even if victory would be partial, with the southern army intact. No, said Bolivar: not a gun fired until the army is perfect and the enemy may be *wholly* destroyed.

The minister plenipotentiary whom Bolivar had sent to sign the treaty of full mutual aid between Colombia and Peru was Joaquín Mosquera. He had signed it in the days of San Martín, and then on the same mission traveled on to Buenos Aires. Argentina had refused Bolivar's treaty with Colombia. Now Mosquera (he was a Granadan) was on his long way home. . . .

. . . I continued by land to Pativilca and found the Liberator out of danger of death, the fever had passed the crisis; but he was so weak and thin that it pained me to look at him. He was seated on a poor leather stool, his back against the rough wall of the little garden, his head bound in a white kerchief; and his breeches revealed the sharp-pointed knees, the bony legs. His voice was hollow and feeble, his head cadaverous as a skull. It was hard to hold back my tears. I asked him: "What do you intend to do?" His eyes fired and his voice grew strong, as he answered: "*Triumph!*"

The word was not empty. In detail, Bolivar told his friend what he was doing. He had asked Mexico for a loan to Peru, guaranteed by Colombia. Refusing their refusal, he was making new demands on Chile and Buenos Aires for troops. Of Santander, he was requiring sixteen thousand more men.

"I am building a strong cavalry in Trujillo," he said. "Shoes are coming from Cuenca and Guayaquil; every good horse in the country has been requisitioned; and I've got all the alfalfa there is, to fatten them up. As soon as I am well enough to move, I go to Trujillo. If the Spaniards come down after me from the Cordillera, I'll whip them with my cavalry. If they remain where they are, in three months I'll have the force to attack. I'll climb the mountains, and beat them at Jauja."

Once again . . . as at Cartagena in 1812, at Jamaica in 1815, at Angostura in 1817, at San Fernando de Apure after the 1818 debacle . . . Bolivar was integrated — *healed* — by adversity. But there were differences: he was older, his body was

worn; there was a feverish note in this *Triumph!* And Peru was different. Peru had to be conquered: an army of *Colombians* would have to invade Peru and overcome an army of *Peruvians*. In Venezuela and New Granada, Bolivar had had to fight local leaders . . . Castillo, Piar, Mariño, many others . . . whose egoism and regionalism blinded them, but whose loyalty to independence was clear. The Riva Agüeros and Torre Tagles were not only *against him*, they were *for Spain*. What did all this mean? Merely that for "the man of difficulties," the difficulties would be greater.

He is circumspect: he supplements his Proclamation to Peru:

Your leaders and internal enemies have uttered calumnies against Colombia, its brave soldiers and me. They have said we presume to usurp your rights, your territory, your independence. [When the enemy is defeated] I and my army will go home, *not taking one grain of sand from Peru*.

He is ruseful. In order to disarm Santander, who might hesitate to help him to more power, he writes that if he were to stay in power, he would fall — like all the others. This is not his intention. "The people of Quito and Peru want to do nothing for their country, and I am not going to tyrannize over them to save them." As soon as possible, he is getting out: "My disgust is mortal, I care to see no one, eat with no one; the sight of a man destroys me."

He is again the full man. Manuela has gone to a village twenty miles away. When he is well he will see her, not before. Meantime, he writes her letters. He learns that his old friend, Bompland, the French botanist, companion of Humboldt, to whom years ago in Paris he offered part of his fortune if he would settle in Caracas, has gone to Paraguay and been imprisoned by Dr. Francia, the xenophobe dictator of that strange shut land. He writes to Francia: flattery, hints of favor, threats of an invasion, to persuade him to let the Frenchman go.

Now, a deeper chord of the past: Simón Rodríguez is back! He has not heard from his old master in two decades. Bolivar pours out his emotion:

Pativilca, 19 January 1824.

To Señor Don Simón Rodríguez,

Oh, my Teacher! my friend! my Robinson! You in Colombia! you in Bogotá, and you've told me, written me nothing! You're the most extraordinary man in the world; I could give you other epithets, did I not fear to be discourteous in welcoming the guest who from the Old World comes to the New; to visit his own country which he has never known, which he has forgotten, — not in his heart but in his mind. No one better than I can know how you love our adored Colombia. Do you recall how on the Sacred Hill of Rome we swore together to free our fatherland? Surely, you will not have forgotten that day of glory for us both; a day which anticipated in prophecy what we dared not even hope.

My Master, how closely — even at your great distance, you must have observed me. How eagerly you must have followed my steps which by prescience you yourself directed. You formed my heart for freedom and justice, for the great and the beautiful! I have followed the path you showed me. You, although from the shores of Europe, have been my pilot. You cannot imagine how deeply your lessons are engraved in my heart; not a comma of your great sentences have I erased. Ever present to my intellectual eye, infallibly, they have been my guide. In brief, you have seen my action, my written thoughts, and surely you have not failed to say: All this is mine, I sowed this plant, I watered it, I defended its fragility, and now behold its fruits, robust and fertile. Being mine, I shall enjoy it in the garden of my labors, bask in its shade; for my right is inalienable.

Yes, dear friend, you are now home! Fortunate the day you touched Colombian soil. One wise just man more comes to crown the erect head of Colombia. I cannot wait to learn your plans; above all my impatience is mortal to embrace you, and since I cannot fly to you, come to me. You will not lose by it. You will contemplate (as you travel south) the immense fatherland you possess, worked from the rock of despotism by the victorious burin of the Liberators, your brothers. No, your sight will not grow weary of the vistas, treasures, secrets, prodigies of this proud Colombia. Go to the Chimborazo, set your foot on that ladder of titans, the crown of the earth, the battlement of a New World. From there, look forth at sky and earth, and in the wonder of terrestrial creation you will say: "Two eternities behold me, the past and the future; and this throne of Nature shall endure as indestructible and eternal as its Author."

Where else can you say this so uprightly? Friend of Nature, ask of it its age, its life, its essence. All you have (thus far) seen is a senile world, — its relics, discards of the provident Mother, when she is

bowed down by the weight of years, by disease, and the pestiferous breath of men. But here Nature is virgin, immaculate and lovely; wrought by the very hand of the Creator. Man's profane touch has not yet marred its charms, its marvelous grace, its intact virtue.

Friend, if these irresistible attractions do not tempt you swiftly toward me, I make another appeal: to our friendship.

Show this letter to the Vice President; ask him for money from me, and come!

BOLIVAR

The eloquence of these impulsive words is their love for America; the perpetual surprise of the lover. The face of America, for this man, sang the Lord's song.

An American naval officer went to Pativilca to have a look at Bolivar. He published his impressions. Bolivar, he said, seemed of far greater age than his forty-one years. He had a quiet dignity that could dispense with protocol. When he dined with his staff, his talk was casual and easy; he reigned through an implicit clarity and sense of his own worth. Bolivar told his guest that he disapproved of the sovereign individual states in the United States: "Federalism will cause civil war," he said. (This was in 1824.) "Prosperity will follow only the later centralization of power in Washington." "This country," he foretold, meaning America Hispana, "will not flourish for a hundred years. First, two or three generations must come and go. We shall need to foment immigration from Europe and the North."

Mosquera's account concludes:

. . . I remained three days in Pativilca, while Bolivar wrote a packet of letters to New Granada and Venezuela for me to take along. On the day I left, he mounted a very gentle mule and came with me to the edge of the desert. My luggage did not show up, so the Liberator, who was very weak, got off his mule and lay down on a waterproof wool raglan which his aide, Julian Santa María, spread on the ground. He stood guard while we talked of Peru's sad state, which he wanted me to portray to Santander. As you know, it is best to cross that waste of sand by night; it was 6:00 P.M. and when I saw the sun sink in the Pacific, I thought painfully it was the sun of Peru going

down. The majestic aloofness of the sea, the vast desert solitude before us and the wail of the seals, oppressively turgid, mingled with my thoughts of how we were risking the life of our leader and our army.

At last my luggage came. Still lying on the ground, the Liberator said: "Tell them at home how you found me, half-dead on this inhospitable shore, fighting for the freedom of Peru and the security of Colombia."

He got up and embraced me. We parted with no words further, as if to hide our affliction and our care. . . .

Soon Sucre was in Trujillo. Bolivar rode north to his new "Capital." And they went to work.

## Z E N I T H

BOLIVAR turned less toward Santander. He had clamored for ten thousand men more than previously agreed, two million more pesos. "I mention this," he sardonically wrote, "just in case all my [previous] letters were lost, for how can I believe you so blind and deaf as not to have heeded my five hundred letters on the subject? Finally, the humorless, always correct Vice-President replied:

If Congress gives me the financial means, or I manage them from Europe, you will have them. If not, no! for I can work no miracles. . . . Nothing could have hurt me like your blaming the Government for the evils of Peru. I would have preferred news of the defeat of our Army. . . . I have presented to Congress my vindication on this point; I shall publish it, so it is known in the whole Republic and the world. I am governing Colombia, not Peru; the laws that have been given me by which to govern do not concern Peru, nor has their nature changed because the President of Colombia commands an Army on foreign soil. . . . Either there are laws, or there are none. If none, why do we deceive the people with phantoms? If the laws exist, we must obey them. . . .

More and more, Bolivar turned away. Until Santander wrote: "It's a century since we have heard from you — even a complaint."



In tense dialogue of partnership with Sucre, Bolivar accepted his "son's" judgment that they must rely, not on Peru, not on Bogotá: on themselves. All Peru . . . the most fertile lands, the mines, the ports and cities . . . was Spain's, except for the narrow valleys about Trujillo and Cajamarca. These were in the absolute power of two methodical, now ruthless Venezuelan soldiers. Martial law was declared, the draft was established, deserters were shot. Horses and livestock were requisitioned; grain and alfalfa were sown and stored; every horse had to be shod and equipped with a poncho for fighting in the snow of the Sierras. Towns became factories: Cajamarca wove wool and cotton, Lambayeque made shoes, saddles, leather ponchos; Trujillo made horseshoes, lance-heads, nails; every village turned out powder and bullets. Ecuador (where Bolivar exercised the President's extraordinary powers in a "theater of war") sent clothing, lances and other articles of wood. All this meant great expense. Rich ranches were seized and sold at cash prices. Churches were stripped of their silver and gold. Tax was heaped on tax, and a bank of ready money was built up.

The re-creation of the army, mostly men of the plains, was the task of Sucre. The riders had to learn to fight at fifteen thousand feet above the sea; the infantry went on thirty-mile hikes and got inured to the *soroche*, the treacherous mountain sickness. Viceroy La Serna's Indians could run all day on a handful of maize and coca; the invading patriots must learn to match them. Spies filtered through the enemy land, and with what they brought back Sucre drew his own maps, which Bolivar studied. Spies stole deep to feel the Spaniard out, to learn his mood and movements.

Finally, a triad of passes was chosen for the patriots to climb, to converge and fall upon the enemy. The passes were made ready: corduroy patches were laid over bogs, parts of bridges were stacked for swift construction, firewood and forage were stationed on the bleak ways where the troops would rest and sleep.

They had been motley groups. General John Miller, one of

the best officers inherited from San Martín, described them in an early stage:

Some were mounted on mules, others on horses. Some wore bear-skin caps, some hats with crown and rim, some helmets. A few had feathers in their hair. Their dress was no less varied; hussar jackets, infantry cuirasses and *pélisses*, taken from the bodies of slain Spaniards, mixed with patriot uniforms. To these add mameluke bloomers; tight trousers seamed with bells, leather overalls, short drawers, sandals—some went barefoot. In one detail, they were all alike: the poncho, carried in the usual way or bound like a sash around the waist or hung from the shoulder in fantastic shapes; and none failed to carry a lasso. Their arms had the same variety: rifles, pistols, swords, bayonets, cutlasses, lances. . . .

But the motley vanished under the methodology of Sucre. Before they finally marched, a visiting British officer wrote: "The Colombian Army, both foot and horse, could have offered a review in London's Saint James Park, and been applauded."

When would they march? The two generals, affectionate stern "father" and dutiful "son," continued to debate the question. Viceroy La Serna, centered on Cuzco, ancient capital of the Incas, had divided his forces into two. North, the army of Canterac, contiguous to the Colombians, was spread through the pleasant valleys of Jauja and Huancayo, dominating Lima. South, the troops of Valdés were pivoted on Arequipa; in High Peru, a third auxiliary force obeyed Brigadier General Pedro Antonio de Olañeta. Sucre's impulse was to rise against Canterac at once. He expected nothing further from Colombia; he feared, if they waited, that Canterac, forestalling them, might drive them into a retreat toward Ecuador. This, said Sucre, would be a disaster for Colombia's foreign relations, which were beginning to prosper. England had recognized the Republic; France and Russia would soon follow, and President Monroe had warned the Holy Alliance to keep hands off. Sucre admitted that an attack on Canterac would leave the southward armies of Valdés and Olañeta intact. But even a partial victory would yield the rich lands of Jauja and Huancayo; it would free Lima, threaten Callao, remove the menace

of a patriot retreat; it might even persuade Spain to sign a Convention with Colombia, as she had with Buenos Aires.

Bolivar did not try to refute the lucid arguments of Sucre. But he said, "Wait." He exasperated his twenty-nine-year-old "son" with his unreasonable waiting. Perhaps he had got to love his army too much to risk it? Then destiny revealed why he waited. . . .

Thus far, the chief victims of Peru's betrayals had been the patriots; now it was La Serna's turn. In High Peru, remote as Tibet since San Martín had moved the theater of war to the Pacific, Olañeta ruled. He was an archaic Gothic hero, passionate and gloomy, and he resented that a mere viceroy should be above him. The counterrevolution in Spain gave him his pretext; La Serna's was a Liberal appointment, hence void, he decided. He denounced him, and in a grandiose letter to Fernando VII declared himself Viceroy of the High Andes.

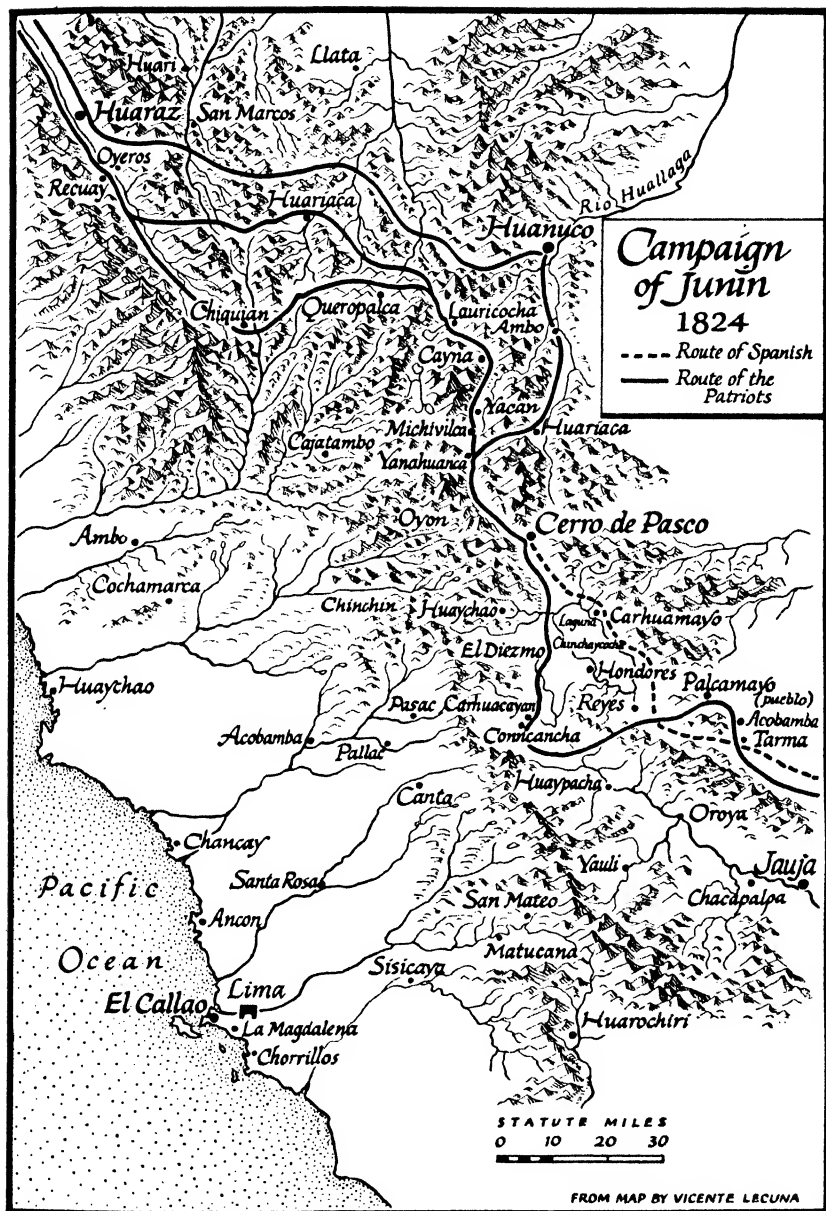
At once, when the news came, Bolivar sprang to action. Perhaps he guessed that Olañeta was mad, for he wrote him fraternal letters about their "common cause," to spur him on. Perhaps he had known beforehand of Casimiro, Olañeta's nephew, who was a republican at heart and hoped to turn the revolt against La Serna to his own ends. Valdés, with a strong part of La Serna's forces, had to march into High Peru; he defeated Olañeta and drove him east of La Paz; but meantime the Colombians were climbing.

The ascent clicked. This was no lunge of desperate intuition like the march to Boyacá; it was more like San Martín's classic crossing from Argentina to Chile. The cavalry rode mules and led their horses, so as not to spend them. Beyond the altitude of grass, the beasts found deposits of fodder, the men supplies to feed and warm them. Bugles sounded the way up to the men in the crevasses; ropes bound them along the heights. On the mesetas knifed by the cruel wind, where snow fell at night and melted in the morning, barracks were ready. In July, they approached Cerro de Pasco, the knot of ranges rich in silver and copper. Here, the waters fall both east and west, and the army moved east. The miserable clusters of clay

huts, barely distinct from the rock, were abandoned, the thatch roofs burned; the Indians had fled with all the food, scorching their cold earth at the news that Bolivar was coming. Southward, below the loom of the great Cerro, was Lake Chinchaycocho, ten miles of bitter water. East of it, where the sources flow into the Amazon, were livable villages and fields; west was a coil and writhe of mountains with no trails except for the llama and vicuña. Bolivar knew that Canterac was approaching by the east; if Bolivar went that way, he would meet, head on, an army twice his size and infinitely more skilled in piloting those heights. Bolivar turned south by the west, braving the chaos. Canterac passed him, reached the Cerro, and rushed back whence he had come. Bolivar, with his vanguard of nine hundred horse, wheeled sharply north to meet him, where they were least expected.

This was the first week of August. On August 6, toward the end of the short day (the sun far to the north and barred by the great mountains), they were at the south of the lake, looking down on the village of Junín within the bleak meseta. They saw the King's cavalry, fifteen hundred strong, mostly Spaniards. Bolivar's men gave a great shout, set their lances, and charged.

These lances had been made in Guayaquil, Loja and Cuenca, towns of south Ecuador. They were twelve to fourteen feet long, flexible and hard, headed with biting iron and strong enough to lift an enemy three feet from his saddle. The men laid their reins on their knees, clasped their weapon with both hands, and galloped forward. Several miles behind, Sucre led the main patriot body; equally far from their own infantry were the fifteen hundred mounted Spaniards. In deafening clash and blinding dust, the Colombians met the King's men, and gave way. The Spaniards pursued forward; cleverly Bolivar re-formed his men on the flank and struck, forcing the enemy toward the water. As if at the bottom of a sack, the Spaniards were hurled, huddled, facing all ways, unable to maneuver. In fifty minutes, as the copper sun broke beneath the iron mountain, they had been ripped to shreds. They fled





south, leaving three hundred and forty-nine men, nineteen officers, dead on the field. Not a shot had been fired.

This was the battle of Junín, a skirmish between vanguards. But the Spaniards, reaching their main force, infected it with fear. Canterac's whole army retreated south, as night came down like a shutter. In two days, the swift-footed Indians were a hundred miles nearer to Cuzco! The Spanish officers rode alongside, and shot the stragglers and deserters. Then, with reinforcements from the Viceroy, they re-formed and again faced north.

To the generals of the Viceroy, Junín had been an unfortunate mischance; at worst a lesson against overconfidence. Canterac did not understand Bolívar, or he would have known that the man of Boyacá and Carabobo would choose the "impassable" way. Even now, neither Canterac nor Valdés suspected what La Serna began to feel: that Junín had been a symbol. Unlike the royalist infantry, these mounted men of the King were Spaniards: Americans had fought Europeans, twice their strength, and broken them! The absence of gunfire gave to the little battle the depth of personal encounter, of war between man and man, the like of which had not been waged in Europe since the eighteenth century, and would never be waged again in any major struggle. Bolívar keenly felt the symbol. As in medieval tournaments, paladins with lances had clashed head-on: the Knights of the Old World against the Knights of the New! The tournament roused echoes in his blood of the Basques who had never bowed the knee in Spain. But Bolívar did not know the finality of Junín for his own life: he had fought his last battle.

The Colombians could not overtake the Indian enemy; but they raced south, gathering abandoned supplies and guns, toward the verdant valleys of Jauja and Huancayo, where they feasted and rested. A division descended to Lima; Torre Tagle and his renegades fled to fortified Callao. But Valdés returned from his victory over Olañeta with more recruits than his losses. The royalist army was stronger than before.

Now Bolívar's cautiousness returned! It was almost as if

another man had won the daring tourney of Junín. He figured that fear of Olañeta, who might revive and return, would keep La Serna from a new offensive; with the season of rains and snows approaching, he was prepared to camp until the coming year in the lush valleys above Lima. It was this that premised his order to Sucre to go north over the great way they had come from Trujillo; to incorporate recruits and the men left in hospital, and to reorganize supplies. But Sucre was battle-minded; the order was like an insult: he was being removed. It seemed to him, from the front to a quartermaster's duties.

On August 28, from Jauja, he wrote a letter, full of pain. Of course he would obey; but his last request was that Bolívar let him honorably vanish, rather than expose him to the derision of his enemies and the condolence of his friends. A week later, Bolívar replied: ". . . In the words of Rousseau, this is the one act of your life that shows no talent. . . . You have failed utterly in judgment, if you think I would offend you. I am full of sorrow for your sorrow, but I have done nothing to cause it." Having explained why the task allotted to Sucre was the most important, Bolívar offered to take it on himself, and to give Sucre the command. The hurt was healed. The episode had risen from the two men's differing premises: Bolívar was sure La Serna would wait, Sucre thought he would move at once; and Sucre was right.

With Canterac and Valdés under his personal command, the Viceroy came swiftly up from Cuzco. Sure they would resist being cut off from Ecuador, he planned to draw the Colombians north with him, and to attack at a favorable place. Bolívar gave Sucre the command, and went down toward Lima. Now La Serna was sure — again mistakenly — that Sucre would resist being cut off from Bolívar and the coast. Sucre let La Serna go where he listed. His enormous marches puzzled Bolívar. "The maxim of the Marshal of Saxony," he wrote Sucre, "fits perfectly: feet have saved Peru, feet will lose it. Obsessions must always be paid for. Since we cannot fly like the enemy, let us be circumspect and prudent." He told Sucre to remain on the defensive, watching La Serna; but at the same



time he gave Sucre freedom, in any emergency, at any final moment, to act as he thought best.

Why did Bolivar quit the field? Because he still did not believe La Serna would attack during the rains and snows. Because he feared the rebirth of Spanish naval power in the Pacific and wanted to build a strong republican navy to convoy the soldiers he was again petitioning from Santander: (*"With more soldiers,"* he had written the Vice-President [his italics], he could have captured the enemy at Junín.) Because he wanted the newly freed coastal region to provide food and taxes. Because he wanted to create a second army (perhaps the wild marches of La Serna in the Sierra masked an attack on Lima). And because he was already planning his Panama Congress.

Sucre stalked La Serna. He was in command, Bolivar had given him ample powers, and he was battle-minded. But Bolivar *believed* in the defensive, and this was enough to hold Sucre back, despite his pain, despite his judgment, despite the weakening of his army by attrition. On November 26, Bolivar assured him again: "You know, dear general, you are authorized to do whatever seems best to you; and this authorization will not be modified, not be restricted in any way." Bolivar was wrong; in a few days came astounding news from Bogotá.

To the Colombian Congress, Bolivar was the President, temporarily relieved of executive duties at home in order to command the Colombian expeditionary force abroad. But the expiring Congress of Lima had named him "Dictator of Peru." This, to the Bogotá Congress, disqualified him from leading a Colombian army, *and he was formally instructed to part from it*. Bolivar obeyed at once, and told Sucre to take over the command. Sucre, for the one time in his life, came close to insubordination. With his staff, he composed a letter of protest and refusal, for both Bogotá and Bolivar. But despite his insistence that Bolivar was still his commander-in-chief, Sucre now felt free for the offensive.

Bolivar proceeded to Lima. On the day of his arrival, December 7, 1824, he sent a circular letter, as President of Colombia,

to the governments of Colombia, Chile, Buenos Aires, Mexico<sup>2</sup> and Guatemala, urging them to choose plenipotentiaries for Panama to form "*a Federation that will serve to counsel us in our conflicts, to bind us in our common dangers, to interpret treaties when difficulties arise . . . in short, to conciliate our differences.*" Let the Assembly open in six months, he warned; "*for delays are dangerous, the world hastens, and it might hasten to our hurt.*"

The act of the Congress in Bogotá wounded Bolivar. He was sure of Santander's part in it, despite his protests. More and more acrimony charged their letters. And Santander's cool request that Bolivar "be not offended" by the Congressional act, lest he make "more trouble" for the Vice-President, must have seemed impudence to the Liberator, after his fourteen months of "trouble" in Peru. But Bolivar graciously obeyed, because a depth of him was happy to be relieved of the command. He had full confidence in Sucre; now he was free for his main business: the creation of a secure America Hispana.

If Bolivar, summoning his Panama meeting the day he got to Lima, was certain of Sucre's victory, the generals of Spain were no less confident. Sucre's refusal to fight seemed to them the signature of fear and failure. Their army's virtuosic march up and down the Cordilleras, exhibiting the marvelous foot-power of the Indians and wearing the Colombians out, was a dance of challenge, a lethal courtship.

Two days after Bolivar's call to the American nations, Sucre's army camped near Ayacucho. It is a pampa, flat and grey, between the village of Quinua to the south and to the north Condorcunca . . . a bleak, bare height dwarfed by the giant range behind it. Condorcunca in Quechua means "condor's nest," Ayacucho means "death's corner," but the field was cultivated by the ayllu of Quinua, which, like all the hamlets of that region, stands on the barren rim a little above the valley.

<sup>2</sup> The Colombian minister in Mexico was instructed to ascertain if the United States would participate, in which case Mexico was to issue the invitation.

Sucre's army occupied the village. Not counting carriers and rearguard workers, it had five thousand seven hundred and eighty soldiers: all Colombians, men of Venezuela, New Granada, Quito, except for the small Peruvian division commanded by General LaMar. (And LaMar was a native of Cuenca in southern Ecuador, hence by birth a Colombian.) The republican army had one piece of artillery; the rest had been lost in an unfortunate rearguard action. The royalists were on Condorcunca, above the pampa and the village; their effective force was nine thousand three hundred and ten men; the officers were Spaniards and high-caste Peruvians; the soldiers, except for some Spanish cavalry, were all sons of the Andes.

Sucre was worried that the Spaniards might descend into the pampa before daybreak. This would have marred his theorem for destroying an army better equipped and almost twice as large as his own. He kept the night wild with noise: clash of materiel, muffled shouts, moving horses, to hold the enemy in suspense about a possible retirement; for if the Colombians were on the move again, the royalists must remain on their height until day, to see the direction they had gone. When day broke, chill and wet, the Spaniards were amazed to find their enemy in plain view, where they had been at dusk! La Serna and his generals, Canterac, Valdés, Monet, Carratalá, rejoiced. Swiftly they sent messengers to all the nearby hamlets; the Indians were armed and instructed to be ready to kill the fleeing rebels. The war in Peru, the Spanish generals were sure (and they were right), would soon be over.

Sucre spoke to his men. Raising his voice to be heard, he said:

"Soldiers, on your efforts today depends the fate of South America."

Then he stopped. Perhaps he had in mind the rotund proclamations of Bolivar before battle; and knew he must not try to rival them.

La Serna's plan was correct. The troops of Valdés would seal the walls of the bowl of which the pampa Ayacucho was the

bottom, and flanking the republicans from north and west press them into the open field. The artillery on the height and the infantry in a half-arc would embrace the enemy and vise it. Now the center would come down into the field from Condorcunca; the whole army of Sucre would be crushed like a nut in a nutcracker.

At ten, Valdés had successfully deployed his forces, and attacked. The Peruvian division, as La Serna planned, was driven precipitously into the pampa. Sucre had anticipated this, and put his own plan into action. The reserves, commanded by the twenty-five-year-old Granadan, José Maria Córdova, went into the dangerous open; as the men of Valdés in successive waves came down from the hill, Córdova's men stopped them. Canterac from his high post on Condorcunca, sure of victory, seeing Sucre's reserves already engaged, sent his center and left down into the pampa. But the Peruvians under LaMar had had time to recover, and again pressed against Valdés, as Córdova wheeled and met the royalists pouring down. Sucre's strategy was daring, and desperately must not fail in any point. It was to occupy the center of the open field (where La Serna hoped to press and destroy him) and from there to shuttle a mobile force (Córdova's) back and forth from it, to left and right. Each of these jetlike attacks, meeting a fraction of the enemy, at that instant was superior to this fraction and could overwhelm it. Thus Sucre's army, only half as large as La Serna's, doubled its power by breaking the battle into a series of immediate encounters, at each of which his striking force was greater. His full presence in the vulnerable open field became an advantage; piece by piece, as the enemy came in, from opposite directions, it was flailed. Sucre's flying power multiplied through speed, as the spokes of a swift-revolving wheel become pragmatically solid. Each royalist detachment, coming down, staggered from a blow that at once flew elsewhere; before it could re-form and follow, there was the blow again — but in the interim that blow had thrust across the field. In less than two hours, the battle was over. Viceroy La

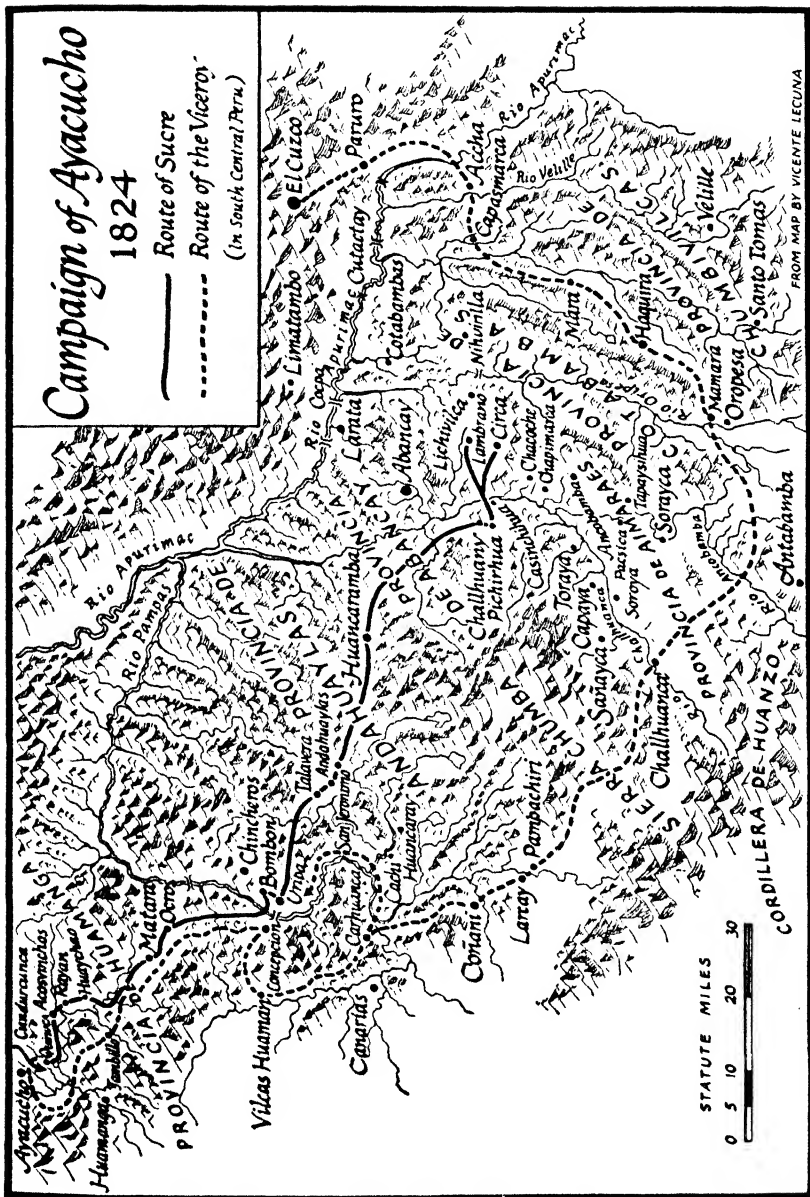
# Campaign of Ayacucho

1824

## Route of Sucre

----- *Route of the Viceroy* -----

(In South Central Peru)



FROM MAP BY VICENTE LECUNA



Serna was wounded and gave up his sword. Spain's claim to America lay dead on the pampa of Ayacucho.<sup>3</sup>

The following day, Sucre wrote to Bolivar:

My General,

The war is over, complete the liberation of Peru. I am gratified most of all because I have been able to fulfill your commission. Your order, brought by Medina, freeing me to give battle, restored me from great trouble; for in the retirement from near Cuzco to Huamanga, always facing the enemy, always facing the risk of a forced battle, I suffered much, much, in spirit. I had to think much, my head hurt more than much.

Tomorrow, the army goes to Huamanga for a couple of days' rest; than at once by divisions to Cuzco, and onward to settle with Olañeta (these Spanish gentlemen say they have no authority to include him in the Capitulation). [Once that is settled] . . . I shall venture to ask you for my discharge, for permission to go home; for this business is ended. I confess, that these days of labor and following your wishes, my spirit suffered much.

I judged it fair to make Córdova a General of Division on the field. He fought divinely. . . .

Followed details of other promotions, of losses, of the problem of Olañeta, of the capitulation of Callao (which would be resisted by the garrison), of the hundred thousand pesos Sucre had saved and now, right after the battle, distributed as a "treat" to the soldiers. Then, the conclusion:

Good-bye, my General. I'm afraid this letter is badly written; my ideas are all muddled. But it's worth something, for it brings the news of a great victory and of freedom for Peru. As my reward, I ask that you keep me in friendship. . . .

At the news of Ayacucho, Bolivar is said to have danced with joy. He did not stint his praise; a few months later, in his biography of Sucre, he called it:

. . . an operation perhaps comparable to the greatest in military annals. Our army was inferior by half to the enemy which had infinite material advantages. We were compelled to scale precipices, heights, river, abysses, in constant view of a superior hostile force.

<sup>3</sup> The royalist losses were eighteen hundred dead, seven hundred wounded; Sucre lost three hundred dead, six hundred and seventy wounded.

This short but terrible campaign . . . deserves a Caesar to describe it. Ayacucho is the peak of American glory, and is the work of General Sucre.

But if Bolivar personally congratulated Sucre, the letter is lost: which is strange, in view of the care with which Sucre preserved his seventy letters from Bolivar. Bolivar did write to Canterac (who had written to him), praising him and the other Spanish generals for their honorable skill in "retarding the emancipation of the New World which is dictated by nature and destiny." And in January, he affectionately scolded Sucre for wishing to retire:

. . . Let us be the benefactors and founders of three great states . . . do not resemble San Martín. . . . You are young, active, valiant, capable of everything: what more do you ask? A passive, inactive life is the image of death, the anticipation of Nothing before it comes. . . . I am not ambitious, but I see that you must be, a little, in order to reach and overtake me. . . . Do not forget, you have a father alive, who will always rejoice in the glory of his son.

## POTOSÍ TO PANAMA

SUCRE had marched at once against Olañeta. In two months, he took La Paz. Recalling Bolivar's plans, and too remote for consultation, Sucre declared High Peru free and summoned an Assembly of its citizens to determine its future. Olañeta, meantime, tried to have Sucre poisoned. The Christian knight caught the criminals and let them go. This was his rule in war, and he never broke it: to make the same just pact with the defeated enemy that he would have made in peaceful arbitration. He pursued Olañeta, and in the eastward bastions of the Andes, where they fall into jungle, the fanatic made a last stand with his remnant army, and was killed. Meantime, the castle at Puerto Cabello had fallen. Except for the stubborn Spanish garrisons of Callao and Chiloe, the island off the coast of Chile (which held out until 1826), South America was free.



Now came a letter from Bolivar which reveals again the ambivalent feeling of "the father," and may explain the absence of a letter of personal congratulation, after Ayacucho. Bolivar criticizes Sucre for calling the Assembly of High Peru, and brutally reminds him that he is a soldier, not a statesman with civil powers. Sucre replies: "... An hour ago, I received your letter of February 21; it has given me great distress not with you, but with myself ... that I have committed an involuntary error, when my sole object was to carry out your intentions."

He reminds his chief that several months before, Bolivar had declared his plan to grant High Peru its independence; that no further instructions had come. Lest he, Sucre, alone in this isolated world seething with political passion, commit further mistakes, will Bolivar please at once send his orders?

Bolivar's reply was to ignore his own rebuke and to corroborate Sucre's action. He began his triumphal march from Lima to La Paz and Potosí, to address the Congress he had scolded Sucre for calling.

High Peru or Charcas had belonged to the kingdom of Peru until 1768, when it passed to the jurisdiction of La Plata. By the literal rule of *uti possidetis*, it should have gone to Argentina; but Buenos Aires, harried by Brazil which had taken Uruguay, and by the anarchic pampa provinces where the gauchos were running wild, did not particularly want it. Charcas was too remote, its Indian population (predominantly Aymara) was too alien; it had too consistently fought off the republican armies of La Plata. But Bolivar did not want the land with its vast mineral wealth to go to Peru. He envisaged a new nation, wedged between Peru, Chile, Argentina and Colombia: a fulcrum of great leverage which could be wielded by Colombia, himself and Sucre. The Assembly in La Paz created the Republic, named it Bolivia, and invited its father to come and to give it a Constitution.

"Bolivia ... Bolivia," Bolivar rolled the word on his tongue. "It sounds sweeter even than Colombial"

He was on his way to La Paz and Potosí ... the dream come

true of Jamaica and the swamp of Casacoima! The Bolivian Constitution, lovingly written in his own hand as if it were a poem, was in his pocket.

It is difficult for the twentieth century to conceive the fame of Bolivar in the Europe of Byron and Scott, Chateaubriand and Hugo, Goethe and Humboldt. Washington, hero of the American North, had come from a lean land, was a man of lean gesture. Spain's America was more populous and lavish; Bolivar's Andean feats of arms were more dramatic, and his words outrang the sober common sense of Jefferson and Franklin. Spain's America was the romanticists' Mecca and Bolivar was their prophet; romanticist and liberal in Europe placed him above Napoleon and Washington.

Bolivar had a vivid sense of these men. In Bonaparte, he admired what the times of Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and Edison were to stamp as "American": the ruthless self-made magnate, the continental organizer and technician. For his lapse into medieval pageant, Bolivar had contempt; like Beethoven, he could not forgive the coronation. In Washington, Bolivar loved the noble man, and envied his possession of a solid people, substance of union. In Napoleon, Bolivar resisted his own vaulting will to power. "What America needs," he once said, "is Kings called Presidents." In Washington, he envied the success from which he knew his more complex world must bar him.

At this apogee, did Bolivar know himself? The answer is not simple. He now accepted the new phase of his life. He wrote to Santander:

The one objective which holds me in America and more particularly in Peru, is the Panama Congress. If I succeed with it, good; if not, I lose all further hope of being useful to my country; for I am persuaded that without this Federation there is nothing. . . . Without it, I see civil war and disorder flying from country to country. . . . I see my own fatherland gods devoured by internecine fire.

Yet he knew Panama was going to fail; he knew *he*, in his individual will, was going to fail. He lived in the American

future, knowing he would not live to see that future. In such a rôle, there is an element of kinetic illusion. Protagonist in a drama whose bitter end (for himself) he could intellectually see, he played his part, scene by scene. He must strive toward the ultimate good end, although aware that his own actions and nature, in their fatality, barred the end toward which they were directed. The good end, for him, was *order* — healing and saving order; yet as early as 1813, in his first address to his people of Caracas, he had warned that he was not the man to bring it.

The analogy to the last phase of Bolivar, now rapidly approaching (six years after Ayacucho, he will be dead), is not a shallower man like Napoleon, who went down mechanically repeating his first will; not a simpler man like the monolithic Washington, who after his retirement to Mount Vernon receded like a mountain, whole into the distance; it is rather to be found in the great poets. The lyricism of *Vita Nuova* becomes the complex organism of the *Divina Commedia*; the ego-centric song of *Werther* evolves into Part Two of *Faust*; *Poor Folks* deepens to *Brothers Karamazov*; the youthful comedy of Cervantes modulates without loss of fire but with infinite complexity to *Don Quixote*. Yet the analogy is not between these consummate works and the *achieved* work of Bolivar, trying to impose order upon the most tumultuous continent in the world; the analogy is between those *works* and this *man*. Bolivar becomes his own hero, his own creation. . . .

It is in this light that Bolivar's Constitution for Bolivia must be viewed. The man was prematurely old; his hair was graying, his eyes were hot, the death he had fought off in Pativilca lurked in his lungs. But the fire of his lyric years lived on in his passionate love for the American world . . . for its landscape, its peoples, its promise. To this love now came a form that would be fatal: his love for Colombia. As Augusto Mijares<sup>4</sup> has keenly pointed out, this desperate love for his created nation, this will to save it, explains much of the seemingly contradictory conduct of Bolivar's latter years. First of

<sup>4</sup> *Hombres y Ideas en America*, by Augusto Mijares (Caracas, 1940).

all, it explains the Bolivian Constitution. For Bolivar's passionate will, soon revealed, was to have the same Law adopted by Colombia, by Peru, by all the states which Colombia would thus lead toward union.

Much of it was liberal for that day. Slavery was abolished; there was a Bill of Rights, similar to Jefferson's, which no one — not even the President in a time of national emergency — could abridge. No Church was named, no word about religion, which automatically entered the domain of individual conscience.<sup>5</sup> The property qualification for suffrage, still prevalent in the United States, was rejected: every citizen of twenty-one and every married man of whatever age must vote, if he could read and was not a domestic servant. Each ten voters named an elector; these, gathered in local electoral colleges, chose the deputies. There were two legislative bodies; and a third House, the Chamber of Censors, supervised the education and cultural life of the country. For misconduct the Censors could impeach and suspend the Vice-President, the Ministers, all public servants except the President. The two legislative bodies chose the first President, whose term was for life. He chose the Vice-President, his successor. But the First Magistrate had no direct power over Congress, which made the laws and levied taxes, nor over the courts and the Censors. Like Britain's King today, the President's rôle was to stabilize the nation.

In the baggage of Don Simón Rodríguez, Bolivar's old teacher, was the manuscript of a book, in which the republican-socialist philosopher explains why a King can endure; he is an instrument of stability and continuity *because he is not an individual* but a symbol. This observation refuted — before he had a chance to apply it — Bolivar's desperate remedy for Hispano-American chaos. A President-for-life in America would be a mere individual; Bolivar had shown why, in his argument against Kings. Therefore, such a President would breed both tyranny (to hold on) and revolution (to overthrow him). The

<sup>5</sup> This was too much for the men of Bolivia, who wrote an amendment recognizing the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church.

premise for the Chamber of Censors was a high standard of judgment in the people who chose them; if that standard existed, the Censors were superfluous; if not, they would soon become a lay church, a profane Holy Office without the traditional wisdom of Rome.

Bolívar's enemies, of course — and from now on they multiply with tropic exuberance, saw in his Constitution the crude instrument for perpetuating his own power. Actually, Bolívar was thinking of his Federation of the Andes (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Chile). He would preside at first; *then Sucre*. He spoke of the "dangerous twelve years ahead"; he foretold the peril of the "hundred years," the "two or three generations" beyond him. The visionary poet of a law that was largely wishful-thinking knew the reality — no one perhaps so clearly — of Venezuela, New Granada, Quito, Peru. He knew their leaders and factions, the ignorance of their folk "on whose side stood justice." He knew the need for strong central rule to balance the centrifugal Hispanic nature (this need was the secret of the function of Spain's Kings and of Spain's Church). He knew that prior to the climax of the eighteenth century, the growth of the nations had been the growth of monarchs. The capitalist system and its ideologists, the liberals, opposed this centralism which interfered with the health of the middle class. Political decentralization was to be the order of the nineteenth century, the classical capitalist epoch. And liberal intellectuals like Santander unconsciously adopted the middle-class ideal. But there was no capitalism, there was no middle class, in America Hispana; and there was the potent dual tradition of a central state, a single Church. Bolívar sought a compromise, tutored by England. To the liberals of the eighteenth-twenties, his ideas seemed a reaction. In the perspective of today, they are also prophetic; for the middle class wanes, and the Machine which it developed in the name of free enterprise presses the world everywhere again toward centralized power.

But it is doubtful if Bolívar saw his Constitution as other than an emergency weapon. He was insistent upon it, but he was also modest. He knew his own genius represented the prin-

ciple of order; he knew no less that it fatefully aroused the counter-principle of chaos. He stood before the Assembly in La Paz, and said:

. . . As I offer you this project, I am overcome with timidity and confusion, for I know my incapacity for making laws. When I consider that the wisdom of ages has not sufficed to compose a perfect basic law, and that the most enlightened legislator is often the cause of human misery, the caricature as it were of his sacred mission, what shall I say for myself? a soldier born among slaves, buried in the wilderness of his country, who has known only captives in chains and comrades-at-arms to break them. I a legislator! . . . Your duty will be to resist the two monster enemies: tyranny and anarchy, that rage like a sea of oppression around our little isle of freedom. . . .

#### SIMÓN RODRÍGUEZ

By his own measure, the achievement of Simón Rodríguez was not unrelated to Bolívar's; Bolívar had won a good part of America, his old teacher had won "considerable knowledge." During the eighteen years of silence between them, Rodríguez had met the socialists of France, the chemists of Vienna, taught school in Turkey, Russia, Italy and Germany, and in London adapted the educational system of Joseph Lancaster, the Quaker. He called himself a disciple of Rousseau and *Enfantin*; his contempt for heredity, his stress on environment and shop-work for the making of citizens, anticipate John Dewey. He had denied himself no pleasures in Europe, yet he left it with sixty-four thousand pesos. "I am one South American," he said, "who went abroad, not to squander a fortune, but to make one." He landed in Cartagena, instead of La Guaira, hoping to find Bolívar in Bogotá. Santander wanted to send him by boat to Lima; but Don Simón chose to go by land, as Bolívar recommended, "to see his country." The story of how they met is certainly not fact, but entertaining. . . .

The courtly air of Lima awed the old man, it is said, who

without announcing himself stood in a group of hangers-on at the Palace, when the Dictator of Peru appeared. Bolivar saw him, knew him at once, and embraced him.

"Man!" cried Don Simón, "after all these years you know me?"

BOLIVAR: "Why not? Isn't that the same coat you were wearing when we went up the Sacred Mount?"

DON SIMÓN: "I have not changed my dress — nor you your character."

Manuela also was in Lima, but she was not invited on Bolivar's journey through Peru to Potosí and La Paz. Rodríguez went along . . . with the Constitution; he was part of the campaign. In Guayaquil, on his way south, he had written to Bolivar:

I've returned to America, not because I was born here but because its inhabitants are busy with something I like. . . . I hear it said (by some with sighs, by some who make me sigh) that you are going to leave [America] as soon as you are finished with a certain business. If, as I think, the business is Freedom, I am at ease; it will be long before *that* is finished.

"To make republics," Don Simón said, "new men are needed." That was *his* business. Bolivar named him "Director and Inspector General of Public Education and Beneficence." At each town on the way up to Potosí, Don Simón would find teachers and start schools.

Bolivar had agreed to extend his personal mandate in Peru for another year (1825), until the Congress of 1826 could establish constitutional rule. He committed the reins to his cabinet, and left Lima on April 10. Before Junín, in Pativilca and Trujillo, Bolivar had lived among the ruins of pre-Incaic Chimu; near the vast buried city of Chan-Chan, whose art recalls the sensuous figurines of Cnossus in Crete. Now he and Rodríguez and their retinue followed the Inca coastal road to the south; a road still strong as it thrust across the sands and

lateral green valleys through the remains of ancient cities, the aqueducts, fountains and crumbled towers and mounds of Lima, Ica, Nazca. Among the ruins, they found a miserable people, never restored from the trauma of conquest. In every village, Bolívar discussed local problems, reorganised the economy, left funds for the schools, drawing as he went a veil of hope from Quilca, four hundred miles south of Lima; the company turned east and ascended to Arequipa. This town, a garden within volcanic stone, pastured and grazed lies in a trance within the embrace of three huge volcanoes: the snow-peaked El Misti, Chachani and Pichu Pichu. They remained nearly a month. Arequipa is the link for unity of fact. Then they rose to Cuzco, the Inca stronghold. The mountains had been at archaeological ruins, of a living toll equally burden, and of herds of wild Indians and alpacas. Even these were dwindling, and Bolívar set up a bureau for their care and increase. Five weeks from Lima to Arequipa, two weeks to Cuzco, two more months to La Paz, seven more weeks to Puno: the silver mountain, a voyage through human misery and grinding problems. Yet Bolívar glowed with lyric fire, partly perhaps because the friend of his youth was with him, but chiefly because he was kindled by the hope he inspired in the people. He walked on flowers thrown by white-garbed maidens; he passed under arches of flowers; he was submerged by the flowery speeches of the local dignitaries, each of whom, veiling and straining, needed to link his presence to all history, past and future. The music of his way made Bolívar dance and drew forth pretty speeches. To the maidens of Arequipa, he said: 'Daughters of the Sun, now you are free as well as fair. You have a country illumined by the liberating army. Your fathers are free, and your brothers. Free will be your lovers, and free the fruits of your embraces.' To a group of matrons: 'I have always been a soldier of Beauty, for I have fought for freedom, which is beautiful.'

A subtle sensuousness flushed his words, which might have been absent from them if Manuela had been present.

Bolívar accepted his Constitution with a few changes, and Sucre agreed to be President, for two years only. Bolívar re-



turned to Lima; and Peru (only the Province of Sarapampa dissenting) also accepted his Constitution. Rodríguez remained with Sucre in La Paz.

"The road to perfection is built of a series of favorable modifications." With this axiom, inherited by modern education (it is organically false), Rodríguez proceeded to form "new men" for the Republic. Americans had been schooled by centuries of Spain to believe that the health of the State rests on priests and lawyers: let them learn that it depends on work in wood, stone, metal. They had been taught by priests that they are corrupt with original sin and saved by miraculous Grace: abolish the priests' religion. The female half of the race had been reduced to humble servants of their husbands: put girls in class with boys and experience will teach them they are equals. Don Simón would have been at home in New York's Greenwich Village of 1910. He advocated simplified spelling and pioneered in semantics, applying it to the problems of race prejudice. "We justify our inhumanity," he said, by calling our rivals bad names. . . . Rodríguez in La Paz knew what must be done with his little Indians and mestizos, victims of shame and exploitation. He proceeded to do it: after gathering them in happy schools, he fused work with play. Rousseau had said, "All evil comes from weakness; the child is bad only because he is weak; make him strong, he will be good; one who can do everything will never do wrong." Rodríguez began making strong boys and girls— with skilled hands, with hearts unafraid and nourished by love— and tainted by the "semantic" lies of caste and religious guilt.

At once, of course, he was head-over-heels in trouble. The good folk of the Andes did not like his casual remark that in six years he would abolish Christianity. The prelates hated his influence on humble parish priests who loved the love in the man. The local artisans were jealous of the French carpenter as he imported to teach his pupils by the highest standards, and who received a larger wage than their own. The fathers and

mothers were outraged at the sight of their boys and girls seated side by side in school on the same benches. And Sucre, trying to be respectful out of respect for Bolivar, was shocked at the old man's indifference to administrative economics. When Sucre asked for an accounting, Rodríguez, who sensed his intellectual hostility, flew into a rage. Sucre withheld his own ideas, and found himself spending much of his time protecting Rodríguez from furious town fathers. He wrote complainingly to Bolivar: Don Simón gave him more trouble than a Spanish army. In six months, Rodríguez had run through his official funds — and his own fortune. Slander had made him a "satyr, corrupting the morals of the young." He insisted on resigning, and Sucre reluctantly let him go (his letter to Bolivar was sincerely sad).

Don Simón did not write to Bolivar; did not return to him in Lima. He had failed, he knew Sucre would diligently report the facts (the letters are extant), and he did not intend to plead. He wandered off — and began what was to be an Odyssey of struggle and of want through South American cities. And at last, Bolivar heard from him:

. . . I have not wished to write you before, lest I give the slightest appearance of trying to excuse myself. . . . Twenty-one months I have waited, so that everyone who would, has had time to accuse me; so that you have had time to judge me; so that I would have proof of what infinitely concerns me — your friendship. . . . The work I undertook calls for your presence; and your work, to be fulfilled, called for mine. . . . They have asked me to go to Mexico; but what can I do in America without you?

The letter is long, loving, pitiful. Rodríguez had encountered ignorance, prejudice, envy, narrow precisionism (this was Sucre); and only Bolivar, winner of battles, could have swept them away. So far as is known, Bolivar did not answer; if this is true, it is perhaps the cruelest deed of his career. No recorded sign ever passed between them again. Rodríguez accepted the offense without a breath of rebuke. In the twenty-seven years that remained to him, he wrote and spoke invari-

ably of Bolivar with love and with compassion.

But how explain Bolivar's silence? Again and again, he had forgiven failure — including his own. Did he not say: "The art of victory is learned in defeat." There is only one explanation of Bolivar's silence: Don Simón had committed the unpardonable sin of offending Sucre.

### Q U I C K S A N D S

FROM February to September, 1826, Bolivar made his home in the villa of Magdalena (where the viceroys and San Martín had stayed): three miles south of Lima toward the sea, across a tree-lined plaza from a colonial church with gemmed gold-wrought churriqueresque altar. Here he lived, openly for the first time, with Manuela. It was his longest residence in one place since 1810 — longer even than his exile in Jamaica. The relationship with Manuela had grown. Periodically, her husband tried to get her back; a sample of her response (with all her breathless style and punctuation) has survived in a copy which she sent to Bolivar.

Lima, October 1823

No, no, no, no more man, for pity's sake, why do you make me write and break my resolution, what will it gain us? only the pain of telling you a thousand times No. Señor, you are excellent, inimitable, I will never say anything else, but my friend to leave you for General Bolivar that is something, to leave a husband without your virtues would be *nothing*, and do you conceive that after having been the beloved of that señor for a year and being sure of possessing his heart, I would prefer to be the wife of the father, son, or holy ghost? Not of the holy Trinity! and if I grieve at all it is that you weren't even better in order to have left you. I know I cannot be united with him under the auspices of what you call *honor*, but do you really think me less honorable because he is my lover, not my husband? Ah! I do not live in those social preoccupations that were invented to torture us. Leave us alone, my dear Englishman. Let's do this! in heaven we'll marry again, but on earth No! is that a bad bargain? If so, I'll say you're hard to please; in the celestial Fatherland we'll pass an angelic life together — all spiritual (for as a man

you're dull). And we'll live English-fashion, for monotony is the exclusive trait of your nation. Dull, I mean in love, for as to the rest, who is cleverer when it comes to business and navigation, but you English love without pleasure, you converse without grace, you walk slow, you salute with reverence, carefully you sit down and get up, you jest without laughter, all divine formalities but I poor mortal laugh even at myself and at you and at all these English solemnities so that it will go ill with me in Heaven, as ill as if I went to live in England or in Constantinople, places I conceive of as tyrannical with women, although you were never so with me even if you were jealous as a Portuguese and that I do *not* like, do I lack good taste? Enough of joking, formally and without laughter and in all seriousness, truth and purity of an Englishwoman I say that *never will I unite with you again*. You are an Anglican, I am an atheist, but the strongest religious impediment is that I love some one else and not you, the greatest, the strongest, do you not see with what earnestness your constant friend is thinking?

MANUELA

"P.S. [Written to Bolivar.] I must inform you that my husband is Catholic and I never an atheist, the need to drive him away made me write as I did.

The year before their months in Magdalena (1825), Bolivar had made the gallant effort to send Manuela back to her husband and the conventions. Their liaison was unfair to her, he wrote: "In the future, you will be solitary at the side of your husband, I will be alone in the midst of the world. Only the glory of having conquered ourselves will console us." Manuela overruled the attempt . . . if it was sincerely that. Now Lima accepted her as Bolivar's formal mistress. Her flamboyant costumes, her positive strong mind, her riding astraddle in crimson bloomers with the two black girls, Natán and Jonatás, as bodyguard, appealed to the effete City of Kings.

Historians have made an idyll of the Magdalena; at last, they say, Bolivar enjoyed the peace and relaxation of a home with a beloved woman. The evidence objects. Manuela loved Bolivar deeply, and her love absorbed him; she loved with full faith in his victorious destiny, and her illusion absorbed him. For the first time (his later letters prove) Bolivar was wholly drawn by a sensual passion; and this meant, he was drawn from

his own center, from his detachment, from lucid consciousness of his destiny. He did not neglect his duties; this was no banal interlude of Caesar and Cleopatra, of "a world well lost." The dislocation was subtler. He went daily to the Presidential Palace, where he worked often all night, and his last months in Lima were crowded as never before with plans and projects. But the objective judgment was gone; he began to see himself with the adoring eyes of a woman who could not doubt his indefeasible rightness, his inevitable triumph. Manuela helped him in his labors, sustained him and soothed his nerves; but when he embraced her, he embraced *her* absorption. There was in her love (it would grow stronger) the mother's fierce passion for her son. But the son shall not embrace the mother.

Whether this waning of Bolivar's ruthless detachment was due to the waning of his energy, or whether sensual love drained that energy and clouded him in a euphoria of self-confidence, who shall say?

Lima adulated him — and for the first time, Bolivar was deluded by a show of devotion which he should have known as the balance to Lima's perfidy. Immediately after Ayacucho, an event of ill omen had occurred in Lima: Bernardo Monteagudo, his friend and one of the greatest friends of American union, was murdered: Bolivar should have read the sign. The Peruvian Congress voted him a personal thanks-offering of a million gold pesos; this he declined. But when it accepted his Constitution, he leaped to the decision that Colombia also must adopt it: with Peru, Bolivia and Colombia united in one state, his Federation of the Andes would be more than half forged.

The Panama Congress had opened at last. Bolivar envisaged it, not yet as a political union but as part of the technic for bringing the young nations close, until they *grew* together. Meanwhile the work of political adhesion must go on. Hence his Federation of the Andes, which would gear in the North with Central America (headed by Guatemala) and Mexico; in the East with liberated Cuba and Puerto Rico, and in the South with Rio de la Plata (Argentina). Dr. Francia had isolated

Paraguay; Bolivar proposed a military expedition to oust him and return Paraguay to Argentina. Brazil threatened Buenos Aires; Bolivar was ready, if necessary, to make war on Brazil — until a republican Brazil joined the American union. Finally, he would invade Spain herself, to free the Spanish people! His plans did not neglect the more organic means of national cohesion. Having lost faith in Rodríguez, he invited the Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, to come to Caracas, to reform the schools of Venezuela, eventually of all Colombia. He sent him twenty thousand pesos as a personal advance and promised him millions.

. . . The Panama Congress opened. Colombia, Peru, Central America (Guatemala) and Mexico, were represented each by two delegates; Chile, despite her promise, made excuses and sent no one; Rio de la Plata abstained; Brazil abstained; Bolivia was not ready. The United States delayed. First Washington insisted on neutrality toward Spain. When Bolivar promised to put off his project of freeing Cuba and Puerto Rico, Secretary of State Clay named two delegates, with no power to act. The first, Richard C. Anderson, American minister in Bogotá, died en route to Panama; the second arrived after adjournment. Great Britain sent "an observer," Holland another. In July, the eight plenipotentiaries, representing four of the eight American states and a minority of the Hemisphere's land population, signed a pact of mutual defense, of no war without previous arbitrament by the Union, of abolition of the slave trade, and of agreement for an inter-American army and navy. Then the Congress adjourned, to reconvene again in Mexico. There, it faded; even Mexico failed to ratify the pact.

Bolivar in his viceregal room in Lima's Palace looked out upon America; compared the facts with his Plan. Buenos Aires, capital province of La Plata (now Argentina), was fighting Brazil for Uruguay; Salvador, in conflict with Guatemala, was destroying the Central American Republic; Chile was in revolution; Bolivia's army was plotting against Sucre; LaMar in Peru was biding his time to take Guayaquil from Colombia

and to restore Bolivia to Peru. The Panama Congress had not marked the dawn of American co-operation; it had rung up the curtain on a century of disunion. The war years, Bolivar saw, had been American, at least in germ: San Martín, an Argentinian, had freed Chile and Peru; Bolivar of Caracas had made Bogotá the capital of a vast nation; Sucre, a Venezuelan, presided in High Peru; Monteagudo, of the kingdom of La Plata, had made Lima the headquarters of his plan for Federation; Olmedo of Guayaquil had been a legislator in Peru, then a diplomat for Colombia. These were a few instances, among hundreds, of an American dawn. Panama presaged its eclipse. With bitter clarity, Bolivar wrote: "The Congress of Panama, an institution which would be admirable if it were effective, is nothing but the mad Greek who thought he could guide the ships on the sea from a rock on the shore."

The worst news of all came from Venezuela. Páez and his party, in open feud with Santander, were undermining the authority of Bogotá; professing love for Bolivar, Páez was being pushed by subtle, sinister men toward rebellion. Bolivar was not angry with Páez; he could tame the old Lion of the llanos. But it was time to go back; and with Bolivar would come his healing Constitution.

This now was Bolivar's response to the circumambient, the rising chaos: his Constitution — which meant, for the perilous moment, himself, himself single-handed. Bolivar began to write letters everywhere . . . to Caracas, Bogotá, Quito . . . to Olmedo, Santander, Páez . . . urging the need of his Constitution. Around him in Lima gathered reactionaries of the Church and the great estates, who loved his Constitution as a means to perpetuate their autocracy. No matter: although their politics were blacker than Fernando's, Bolivar smiled on them, since they were for his Constitution. The American world split, for him, into two: there were the friends of his Statute, the friends of America; and there were those who opposed it — his enemies and the enemies of peace and order.

Olmedo abhorred the Constitution, which he interpreted as Bolivar had interpreted Napoleon's coronation. Olmedo had

written a great Ode to Bolivar, which Bolivar as a fellow intellectual had criticized — perhaps too brilliantly. Olmedo, the lost liberal friend, was a symbol. Santander, as always, was circumspect; the Bogotá Congress, he wrote, did not like the Constitution. Meantime, disorder gathered, a storm from Cumaná to Quito. Britain had granted Colombia a loan; it was being squandered in scores of petty offices beyond Santander's grasp. In 1825, Colombia's income had been a meager six million pesos; her outlay (omitting the service on the debt) eleven million. Do you not see, Bolivar pleaded with Santander: it is all the fault of the loose Cúcuta Constitution! By its intricate delegating and staggering of powers, it made control impossible in Bogotá. Santander needed an effective weapon; how could he fail to seize it when it was at hand? Santander remained cold; Bolivar found the reason in Santander's ambition. So be it! Bolivar was ready to resign; let Santander be the first Life President of Colombia — under Bolivar's Constitution! And Bolivar meant it. Through his sister, María Antonia, in Caracas and his representative in London, he arranged for the sale of the one property he had kept (it was tied up in litigation), the copper mine of Aroa. It would fetch a hundred thousand pesos; on its interest of five per cent he would retire and live in London. His Constitution, he would not resign! It alone could save the Colombia he had created and loved.

Bolivar was used to working alone: to expressing the public will and the public good, with a high hand. Since he had declared the "war without quarter" in Trujillo in 1812, how many times he had seemingly opposed the people in his articulation of their unconscious impulse to be free! how often he had fought his leaders and theirs . . . Miranda, Piar, Bermúdez, Castillo, Mariño . . . in order to save *their* will for freedom! Now he would fight alone for the order that would save their freedom. He did not see the ironic dislocation that had come upon him. He had been intuitively moved by his America which needed to be independent; but if now this same America deeply needed chaos? if in that dark impulse, his own harmony with the American world was breaking? To himself, nothing



had changed: to him, the need had been freedom from Spain, now it was freedom from anarchy. With the same high hand, he would serve the new need!

Páez was flouting the national law, now openly. Bolivar's sister pleaded with him from Caracas: "Come back! Only you can save us!" In July, a rebellion of Peruvian army officers was discovered just in time. From Lima to Panama, failure. . . . Bolivar had responded to failure before. He packed his answer in his portmanteau: his Constitution. On September 4, 1826, three years and three days after his arrival in Peru, he sailed from Callao for home.



$$\|y\|_1 \leq \|y\|_2 \leq \|y\|_1, \quad \forall y \in \mathbb{R}^n.$$

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<sup>1</sup> Factors to be reported by the respondent are indicated.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32



## X

### The Intruder

"One disillusion is worth a thousand illusions."

#### THE RETURN OF THE HERO

BEFORE he left Lima, Bolivar knew the Venezuelan crisis. Want darkened his homeland. The cattle were killed off; the farms were wilderness again, the men of the fields were sinking to the economic level of the Indians of the Orinoco. His people had sacrificed out of all proportion to their numbers and wealth; they had given the Continent its hero; he had repaid by transferring the national seat to Bogotá, a thousand miles from Caracas, and the national power to Santander, a man more alien and remote from their love than the King. There were many factions in Venezuela, but this was their common law and Páez was its prophet.

The strongest group were the Federalists. Unable wholly to escape Bolivar's will, they favored a loose union of the Colombian "nations." Their newspaper, pointedly, was *El Venezolano*. In 1824 they staged a revolt in Petare, a suburb of Caracas, and Páez smiled on it, when a strong word from Bolivar stopped him. They modulated to Monarchists, winning the support of the colored artisan class, long loyal to the King; and again Páez sympathized. Who should wear the crown? Bolivar! Páez sent a personal envoy all the way to Lima: "Come home! Be King in Caracas. Integrate Venezuela, and from this solid heart of your own land spread your vision to Bogotá, to Lima,

to Buenos Aires, to Habana!" Bolivar sent the envoy back to Páez with a rebuke: the man who had fought to free Americans would never *descend* to a crown. But he had a better cure: his Constitution. Let Páez study it, publish it, make his friends plead for it. Meanwhile, Santander ruled . . . and taxed . . . in Bogotá.

Now a new order for conscription! The demand for fresh armies originated with Bolivar. Buenos Aires might need help in the war with Brazil; the Spaniards must be ousted from Cuba and Puerto Rico (on this point, after the indifference of the United States to his Panama Congress, Bolivar had abandoned his policy of appeasement); Spain must be invaded and freed of the Bourbons. But the young men of Caracas and Valencia knew only that the conscription order came from Bogotá, from Santander. Páez ignored it; it was too unpopular to be enforced. A year later a new threat loomed on Venezuela's open coast, from France, which with Spain, Russia and Prussia had formed a coalition that might break the defense of Britain and the United States.<sup>2</sup> An invasion was preparing, it was rumored, from the French and Spanish Caribbean islands. Páez took the threat seriously, revived the lapsed conscription order, and when the young men failed to appear at the recruiting stations, he sent his sergeants into the streets to round them up. There were shouts, blows, blood.

Páez, the best-loved man in Venezuela, had enemies. The revolution was a failure, he sardonically wrote to Bolivar, since it left the lawyers alive. They and their masters, the remnant creole aristocrats, hated Páez and controlled the Cabildo of Caracas. Now they sent a formal accusation to the Congress in Bogotá: in rounding up the youth as if they were mavericks, Páez had exceeded his authority and flouted constitutional rights. The Congress, out of touch with Venezuela, ordered Páez to appear before it and defend himself; meanwhile, it temporarily relieved him of the command of the Army in Vene-

<sup>2</sup> Bolivar probably knew that the Monroe Doctrine was not primarily intended to protect the Latin-American republics. See *Autopsy of the Monroe Doctrine*, by Gaston Nerval (1934).

zuela, replacing him with a subordinate whom Páez detested. The old warrior roared; for several days shut himself up in his room *incomunicado*. When he emerged, he was quiet. Santander, he was convinced, had inspired the humiliating order (Santander denied it and deplored it) to make him, the great soldier, trek a thousand miles to defend himself before a Congress of lawyers for having enforced *their* law. But he was ready to obey. It was a wise decision. Had he carried it out, his way to Bogotá would have been a victorious march; his appearance before the Congress a triumph. But Páez lacked political acumen, and was easily duped by shrewd manipulators. The separatists in Venezuela knew that if Páez went to Bogotá, he and the Constitution would emerge strengthened. They persuaded the Lion that he must not go; that to go would be to accept insult for himself and his country. They completely befuddled the roughrider, who changed his mind and announced that he would disobey the unjust Congressional command. Santiago Mariño in Oriente, always avid for trouble, backed Páez; Valencia and the plainsmen of Apure backed him; but Maracaibo, Guayana and the legal gentlemen of Caracas condemned him; the country lurched to the brink of a new civil war. As the news spread, insurrection flowered in the Colombian South, like seed dormant during drouth that springs to life in the rains. Pasto rose again; the Ecuadorian cities, Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca — suffering too from economic depression and resenting the tax powers wielded by Bogotá — declared themselves “sovereign,” disavowed Congress and Constitution, and called on Bolivar to lead them into a new union. The reaction to all this in Bogotá was to make a slogan of the Constitution, which could not legally be reformed until 1831. Santander became the champion of the law.

Bolivar had made a false step as soon as he disembarked in Guayaquil. The men who were for him were also the men who disavowed the current Constitution. Instead of rebuking, he embraced them. To several officers, leaders of the anti-Congress

movement, he gave promotions. True: he proclaimed the validity of the Constitution of Colombia; declared that of course it must be honored, until 1831 when it could be legally amended; but his deeds were more eloquent than his words. By welcoming the subversives, he antagonized the Constitutionalists and drove them into the arms of Santander; protesting he had come to restore order, he sowed disorder. What he did in Guayaquil, he repeated in Quito, in Ibarra, in Pasto, in Popayán, in Neiva. The bad news advanced north before him: Bolivar was "against the Constitution," "against *the laws*."

The poet can afford to be misunderstood; not the statesman. And essentially the people were not wrong, since Bolivar had lost faith in the laws and in "the man of laws" ruling in Bogotá. A philosopher in 1826 might advocate a constitutional change five years hence; but to the people the advocacy by Bolivar meant Bolivar's *present* contempt, a *present* undermining. His proclamations, moreover, had a dangerous paternalistic note. "I have sinned," they virtually said, "by leaving you for three years. I have come back! Now all will be well." And indeed Bolivar's false steps had preceded his arrival on Colombian soil.

From the Palace of the Viceroys in Lima, on June 1 he had sent O'Leary, now his chief aide-de-camp, north on a mission. One of the instructions had been, "I charge you particularly to provide for the printing in both Bogotá and Caracas of my address [to the Constituent Assembly of Bolivia] and of my Constitution; and to get my friends to write in favor of it." Another mistake was the advice he instructed O'Leary to spread: "that it appears impolitic to me to try General Páez for the affair in Caracas." Even if the accusation was unjust, respect for the law demanded that, once formally made, it should have a formal hearing. Bolivar's method seemed to justify the disobedience of Páez, and to brush Congress aside in favor of a personal solution. The three years of Bolivar's absence from Colombia had insulated him from sensitive rapport with his people.

He had celebrated his forty-second name day, October 28,



1825, the day of Saint Simon, at the silver mountain of Potosí, while hymns in his praise were sung in all the churches of Peru. About this time, José Gil de Castro painted the portrait which Bolívar praised for "the greatest exactitude and likeness" of the many attempts to record his mobile features. Gil was a primitive craftsman and an intuitive genius; Bolívar's preference for his work reveals that he knew much about himself. Anticipating the dynamic methods of Cézanne and Picasso, Gil gives aspects of both the full face and the profile; the enormous aggressive nose, the mouth turned in irony against its own ruthlessness, the long, hard, coarse upper lip, the poet's sensitive chin, the black brooding eyes that pierce the world and yet look inward . . . portray a man both shrewd and possessed, as a great saint may be shrewd, doing the work of the Lord. Bolívar was in fullest flower. But for the people, the climax of the revolutionary decades was past: they longed for (although they knew not how to achieve) sanity, peace, *normality* and comfort. Upon this temper, the hero now intruded.

To welcome the President, Vice-President Santander rode out to Tocaima, a village near the Magdalena, southwest of Bogotá. All the way north from Guayaquil, Bolívar had pressed his Bolivian Constitution; and the silences, the insincerity of the assents, finally bore in on him that it was alien and unreal to the moment. He said little about it to Santander, and much about his eagerness to support the laws. Santander assured him that not he, but the citizens, opposed Bolívar's Constitution: perhaps by 1831 they would have changed their minds. They spoke of Páez; Bolívar promised to go at once to Venezuela and bring him back to the fold. Santander, a little too fleshy, sallow (he suffered from a sluggish liver), sharp-nosed and sharp-eyed, rode back to Bogotá content. Bolívar, he felt, was far from firm in his autocrat's saddle — and would be a long time in Venezuela. They had both agreed that the country's crisis demanded the exercise of the "extraordinary powers" granted by Article 128 of the Constitution. With Bolívar absent again, Santander could wield them in New Granada.

Bolívar rode on to Fontibón, the village where the local dignitaries of colonial Santa Fe de Bogotá had always welcomed the new viceroys as they approached the capital from the River. Before the old church, and ready with their speeches and their music, stood the Governor of Cundinamarca, the officers, the citizen delegations. Bolívar was nervous and irritable; the talk with Santander had left a bad taste: the awareness that he was retreating and that the graciousness of Santander was that of an opponent sure of himself. The Governor was orating . . . how many of these displays of soggy fireworks he had had to suffer! The Governor spoke of the Constitution, the present one: praised it, praised Cundinamarca's loyalty to it. Suddenly Bolívar's temper cracked; he sprang up and broke the flowing words: This was no time for sermons, he said, sermons about laws (some of which had been disobeyed perhaps, because they were bad). He was the Army of Colombia, home from triumphs in Quito, Peru, Potosí. The Army had expected a different welcome! . . . Confusion dissolved the hieratic meeting. A few hours later, Bolívar and his escort rode into Bogotá. In the humblest village of his long way from Guayaquil, he had ridden under arches of flowers, among throngs cheering and singing. The streets of the Capital were silent and vacant; on the walls were placards: **LONG LIVE COLOMBIA'S CONSTITUTION.**

This was the kind of blow that brought Bolívar to his senses. At the Palace of San Carlos, he greeted Santander warmly; he propitiated the abashed Governor; at the banquet, his toasts were for the Vice-President and Colombia's Constitution.

In eleven days he took the saddle again, bound for Venezuela and for Páez.

He had made certain mistakes; well, he had corrected them. The less said about his Constitution and his Federation of the Andes, the better. The plan had cogency. To avoid the fear of dominant States, Colombia would become three states: Venezuela, New Granada (Cundinamarca), Quito; Peru would become three states: North Peru, South Peru (Arequipa), Boli-

via: a union of six, which later, perhaps, Chile and the Provinces of Rio de la Plata, would join. As in the United States of North America, the units would have great local autonomy; but to hold them dialectically together, the Life President would stand above parties and elections. After him, Sucre (now barely thirty years old); after Sucre — ? perhaps by then the *tradition of union* and adhesive social-economic forces would have had time to grow and prevail. . . . It was indeed a good plan, like the Hemisphere Congress of Panama — for the future. Meantime Colombia was in peril, Colombia must be saved. The blood of his great vision flowed now to the immediate lesser form: Colombia. Compressed, it gained power and passion.

Riding in reverse the route of Boyacá, Bolivar knew his way again, and was calm. All Colombia seethed with disorder. Local authorities flouted the laws; the ten per cent income tax was not collected, and the remission of the old taxes of Spain — the *alcabala* and the Indian tribute — left the treasury bare. In the lower levels, graft was common. The people were confused. It was not Santander's fault, it was the *Constitution's*. He, Bolivar, resolved to ride from province to province fighting incompetence and graft, as he had ridden fifteen years, fighting royalists and Spaniards. This was his greatest assignment: Colombia, sick unto death, must live!

On his arrival in Bogotá, Bolivar had written Páez a letter full of his passionate need:

I am in the capital of the Republic, and full of zeal to save Venezuela and you. I know the ills of my country, the dangers that threaten my first, most beloved friends and comrades-at-arms . . . who have given me glory, borne me to Potosí, with mountains of dead raised me to my command over America. Could I be insensitive to your sorrows, fail to requite them with my blood? Dear General, I am resolved to do everything for Venezuela and for you. Venezuela is my mother, from her breast I sprang, and all that is mine; to her I dedicate every sacrifice and my own destiny; and you, first soldier of the army of my brothers, have first claim on me, after my duty to my maternal land. I repeat: Venezuela and you have brought me back from Peru. . . . The papers here astound me, with the way they

treat me. Even your enemies know that my sole mission is to save the name of Venezuela; that I have declared absolute amnesty for all, all who are compromised. . . . I have declared publicly that you were right to resist injustice with justice, the abuse of force with disobedience. . . .

He went even farther; since O'Leary on his mission had declared for the law, thereby offending Páez, Bolivar disavowed his loyal envoy! But when Bolivar reached Lake Maracaibo, he summoned the generals who had opposed the rebellion of Páez, and mobilized an army. Páez in Valencia wrote to Bolivar, professing his love and loyalty, protesting that only his stand against the Congress and Santander held Venezuela from full armed revolt — and also mobilized his army. Mariño declared for Páez; the garrison under Bermúdez, who supported the Constitution, mutinied; the Island of Margarita declared for Páez. He wrote to his chieftains in Apure: "The Liberator comes home, a dagger in his hand."

Bolivar with his assembled troops crossed the hot sands to Coro, and shot this rebuke to his friend:

Your proclamation says I come as a citizen: what can I do here as a citizen? How can I slough off my duty as Magistrate? Who has dissolved Colombia, in respect to me, in respect to the law? . . . I have come from Peru to save you from the crime of civil war. And you wish to take me as a simple citizen? . . . There is no legitimate authority in Venezuela, but mine — and I mean supreme authority.

Bolivar asked for a meeting. The Lion's false advisers — they who had got him into this desperate corner where he raged and roared, warned him against meeting Bolivar; reminded him of the fate of Piar. Bolivar smiled; he liked Páez; he sympathized, perhaps too deeply, with his essential lawlessness. If Páez would not come to him, he wrote, he was on his way to his old friend. Páez rode out from Valencia with a great guard. There was Bolivar, alone, except for an escort of two. Bolivar dismounted and came forward. The two Venezuelans embraced; Páez was weeping . . . the threat of civil war, at least for now, was over.

## THE LAST TIME, HOME

IN BOLIVAR'S papers were a number of "Thoughts on the Panama Congress," jotted in his own hand. Among them:

To move with the nature of things is the master work of the Legislator. . . . Wisdom does not counsel that he foolishly presume to make the government alone responsible for the fate of the citizens; to command, he must obey the general impulse.

If bodies in nature seem at rest, it is because of the equality of action of the forces upon them. What then would be the character of this *equality* in political affairs? Only equality can give peace to the content of social bodies.

For the universe, Descartes posited matter and motion. To form a system or government of Justice, there must be *equality*, which is the matter, and without which there is no justice; and *freedom*, which is the motion of social nature, for there is no moral action without a certain freedom.

*The Legislator must regard men in their relation with the environment, not with abstract ideas.*

But what if the environment were against peace and union . . . not inertially, but by the essential and dynamic will of the people? Bolivar was regarding Venezuela in relation with an abstract idea of peace and union: a common sin in imaginative men. Páez, rightly, represented in his mind the environment of Venezuela; wrongly he clothed him in his own will for peace and union. He named Páez Supreme Chief of Venezuela. He rode with him from Valencia to Caracas; and in the public ceremonies of his return after five and a half years, he called Páez "savior of our country." Páez called off the Congress about to meet in Valencia and to declare Venezuela independent. And Bolivar from his home city issued a Proclamation:

*Colombians:*

Order and law have been reintegrated in every corner of the Republic. . . .

*Granadans:*

Your brothers of Venezuela are the same as always: fellow-citizens, comrades-at-arms, sons of one destiny. . . .

*Venezuelans:*

The reign of evil is past. . . . Let us drown the year 1826 in the abyss of time. . . .

But what if the *environment* with which Bolivar strove to work were of *its essence* against union, against peace?

The unionists and constitutionalists of Caracas who had risked their lives for Colombia against Páez' insubordination resented Bolivar's appeasement; he was weakening his natural allies, strengthening his natural foes, the "little country" men who would take his favors and continue to hate what he stood for. Santander in distant Bogotá was in cold fury: by his logic, Bolivar had won Páez not to the Constitution but to anarchy, to personal rule. This was the appearance, also, in Peru. The Colombian troops still garrisoned there demonstrated against President Bolivar and the Bolivarian Constitution; and in favor of Santander and the actual law. Santander openly acclaimed the mutineers. They marched north toward Ecuador; Santander approved. "Considering the environment," Bolivar seemed to have confused confusion. The press, which Bolivar knew to be subventioned and controlled by Santander, published fierce attacks: Bolivar was called "Dictator"; Santander and his party, which now took the name Liberal, went to the people as the defenders of the law — *against* Bolivar.

Santander wrote letters like this:

. . . You cannot imagine the sorrow your important letter of February 6 has caused me. Every day I find you in a more painful, embarrassing position; and my fierce affection for you inspires the corresponding emotions. Whoever wrote you that you have not two friends in Bogotá told you falsely. If he had said that in Bogotá there were not two friends of the Bolivarian Constitution, of federation with Peru and Bolivia, of the rewards granted by you in Venezuela to the enemies of our State, and of your equivocal conduct in respect to saving the Constitution, he would have reported what is certainly

the fact; but *General Bolivar will have friends wherever there are patriots who esteem his sixteen years of selfless consecration to the public good. . . .*

From his premise, Bolivar heard this as hypocrisy. What was Santander actually saying? — “You were good at Opus I: defeat of the royalists and Spain. You are bungling Opus II: the creating of peace.” Bolivar sent angry words back to Santander; he was murdering the Republic (which needed *his* strong hand); the comedy of their friendship was over. And the Vice-President, always suave, replied:

. . . I can only thank you for asking to be spared the unpleasantness of receiving my letters, and for telling me that you will no longer call me friend. Better a disillusion, however cruel, than poisonous uncertainty, — therefore I esteem your declaration. . . . My prayers will ever be for your prosperity and health; my heart will always love you with gratitude; my hand will never write a word prejudicial to you; and although you never call on me again in all your life nor think me your friend, I will be a friend forever. . . .

Meanwhile, the same hand hidden by *noms de plume* was penning scurrilous articles in papers subsidized by government money; and writing to friends: “Our Liberator has become our enslaver”; “if I had gone over to the Bolivarian party, I would be Vice-President for life with hereditary claims, not the thief, the rascal, the plotter, etc., etc. To those who now slander me, I would be the model of magistrates. . . .”

Bolivar’s constructive work in Peru had crumbled; against his Constitution and the reactionary forces of Church and Land which upheld it as a weapon for their own ends, all factions momentarily united. Bolivar leaned on Santa Cruz, less dangerous than LaMar with his naked plans of conquest in Bolivia and Ecuador. Bolivar wrote to Santa Cruz to save his influence by abandoning Bolivar: “What do I care about the Bolivian Constitution? If they do not want it, let them burn it. . . .” Before the bad news came from La Paz, he intuitively sensed Sucre’s perilous position:

. . . You are in danger. At this distance, I dare not advise you; but friendship must show its care. If it were possible for you to maintain yourself at the elevation we demand of our conduct, I would say, save Bolivia! But if this cannot be, come to Venezuela; contribute at least to the salvation of the land that gave us birth.

In less than a year, Casimiro Olañeta with Peruvian and Argentine officers staged his army revolt. Sucre escaped with a wounded arm, and quashed the rebellion. As always, he forgave his enemies, prosecuting none. He would carry out his promise to remain for two years; then he hoped to live in Quito with the lady of Quito he was about to marry. After that, for Bolivia — ? Bolivar feared the answer.

Bolivar's personal victory over Páez bred swift reaction. He wrote to a friend:

Either the Republic is lost or it must confer on me an immense power.

To another friend:

I see no materials for building; the Republic is shattered. If I desert, I make a bad exit. If I stay, it will be to pay Colombia's funeral expenses.

In a revulsion of petulance, but not without lucidity:

What do I need of Colombia? Even its ruins will increase my glory. It is the Colombians, not I, who will pass to posterity covered with shame. . . .

To his fellow Venezuelan, Fernando Madrid, Minister Plenipotentiary in London:

I shall never again be President of Colombia; but as long as I can, I shall go on serving our Venezuela. . . . My long absence from this country has destroyed it. I must remain here to alleviate — rather, to revive it.

He dreams of retiring to London; urges Fernando Madrid to clear the sale of the Aroa copper mine, that he may have a competence to live on — and at the same time, asks friends to



find him a modest villa near Caracas. Before the Aroa deal is consummated, he allocates the income to Lancaster, the Quaker educator, and to the Abbé de Pradt, his champion in Paris.

On February 5, 1827, in Caracas, when the new alliance with Páez still made him hopeful, he had written to the President of the Senate in Bogotá:

. . . I beg the Congress to review Colombia's situation, America's, and the world's: everything smiles. No Spaniard remains on the Continent. Since the first of this year, domestic peace reigns in Colombia. Many potent nations have recognized our political being, and some are our friends. A good portion of the American States are in federation with Colombia; Britain menaces Spain. What hopes there are! Only time can reveal the immense favors Providence prepares for us. . . . But as for me, suspicions of tyranny and usurpation surround me and perturb the hearts of the people. The zealous republicans regard me with a secret fear, because history tells them that men like myself have ever been ambitious. In vain, the example of Washington defends me; for it is true: with one or two exceptions, the world has always been oppressed by men of power.

I suffer from the anxieties of my countrymen and from the judgment that posterity prepares against me. I am not pure of ambition; I long to snatch myself from the fury of its grasp, to bring peace to my fellow citizens, and to ensure for myself a grateful name after my death among free men. With these motives I resign . . . the Presidency of the Republic. Congress and the people must take this as definitive. After the devotion of my entire life, nothing can oblige me to continue in the public service. Now that the right to freedom is within the range of all, shall I alone be deprived? Congress and the people are just; they will not force me to the ignominy of *desertion*. I have few days left; more than two-thirds of my life are gone: permit me to hope for peaceful death in the silence of a paternal home. My sword and my heart will always be Colombia's. . . .

Excelentísimo señor of the Congress and the Colombian people: I implore the privilege of a *simple citizen*.

Unanimous, the Congress declines to let Bolivar go. He has been able to lead the chaos of the American world toward independence because that chaos is in him — and the will to transcend it. Now its confusion of birth is in him and claims him. He loves this world; its confusion will embrace him. . . .

## THE "GREAT CONVENTION"

ON July 4, 1827, Bolivar saw his home for the last time, and sailed from La Guaira, accompanied by Sir Alexander Cockburn, England's minister to the new nation. A British man-of-war took them to Cartagena, whence they ascended the great river, reaching Bogotá September 10. Meanwhile, the Congress had issued a call for a Convention to meet in Ocaña the following March: "to examine the Constitution and reform or approve it."

The call revealed the spastic state of Colombia. The basic law could not be constitutionally changed until 1831; but the conduct of Bolivar no less than of Páez, the rebellions staggered up and down the land from Venezuela to Pasto and Ecuador, had so undermined the national structure that debate and decision dared not be postponed. Santander had put the peril to political use. He stood before the people as the champion of the law; it had been challenged in high places; the challenge must be met. The years of Bolivar's absence from Bogotá, in Quito, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Santander had been building his "machine." Bolivar was strong with the new officer class (Venezuelans, out of all proportion) whom the years of war had placed in garrison towns and administrative posts throughout Colombia, and whom the allocation of farms had given economic power. Santander's task was to neutralize this class without too overt opposition. In every town and province, there were local interests, local leaders, local jealousies; and with these, he . . . not Bolivar . . . was in touch. While the Liberator jotted down thoughts on the nature of revolution — ("Every revolution has three stages: war, reform, organization. The first is past, it was the work of soldiers; the second we had in the Cúcuta Congress and the Bogotá government; the third, of organization, I would have at Panama") or on world government — ("In the march of the centuries, it may be that a

single nation will cover the globe: a *Federal Union*"), Santander, with a skill that would have won the respect of Tammany Hall and Andrew Jackson, was achieving the organization Bolivar dreamed of; but within practicable limits. By Goethe's definition: *In der Beschraenkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*, Santander, who knew the bounds of his environment, was the political artist. And if the statesman must always be a politician (since politics is the technic of social relations), perhaps it was Santander who qualified more than Bolivar, his rival and now his open enemy. Santander's central aim was to transmute him in the public mind from "Liberator" to "Dictator."

The Convention would be the test between the two men. Bolivar demanded, as the sole means of saving Colombia, a strong executive with normal, not "extraordinary" powers. Santander, in all their personal talks of the recent years, agreed with Bolivar and had not hesitated to employ Article 128. Now he went to the people as a Federalist, sensing their thirst for local freedom and (whatever he actually did) intending to appear to give them what they wanted. On the wider union, the Federation of the Andes, the Panama project, he was eloquently silent, knowing that the peasant of the Granadan valleys, the llanero of Venezuela, the mountaineer of Quito, the Negro of the coasts, were supremely indifferent to these grand destinies — and supremely eager to eat well, to house well, to keep their local pesos or at worst spend them on local roads, not on maps of Hemisphere union.

Delegates to the Convention were to be elected by each Province and Department. Long before Bolivar's return, Santander was at work. And what of Bolivar? The day after his arrival in Bogotá, he wrote to his favorite cousin, General Diego Ibarra:

. . . At the beginning of the new year, when the Convention meets, I am off for Venezuela. Tell my friend, the Marquis, to buy for the two of us that house in Anauco [suburb of Caracas] — and you, dear Diego, even if you are commandant of Puerto Cabello, be prepared to spend many a day with me. . . .

In brief, he intended to put hundreds of miles between him and the Convention; to wash his hands of electioneering and political direction. He was convinced that Santander's project of a weak government meant the death of his beloved Colombia; that Santander wanted this no less than Páez; but he had explained his conviction to the people; more he did not intend — not while the press called him an autocrat! The subjective flush of this decision was revealed by the fact that he immediately hedged on it. He sent O'Leary (who had forgiven him at once for his "disavowal" during the honeymoon of appeasement of Páez) and Briceño Méndez (who had married Bolívar's favorite niece) to the Convention as his whips.

In February, 1828, Bolívar left Bogotá for Caracas. Hardly on the road, he heard of a new revolt, this time in Cartagena; it was smothered at once, but Bolívar stopped; it was not in him to play out his Olympian rôle of aloofness. Where should he go? Ocaña, the Convention city, stood on a mountain near the Magdalena where it spreads before its final sweep toward the sea. Radials drawn between it, the Andean gate to Venezuela, and Bogotá to the south, would intersect at the town of Bucaramanga. Bolívar went to Bucaramanga. He arrived there on March 31, a few days before the Convention opened; and there he remained until June 7, after it had closed. . . .

Weeks in advance, Santander was in Ocaña. He rented the best lodgings and bestowed them graciously on the delegates. He and his staff named themselves the Committee of Credentials, and any professed partisan of the President whose papers showed a technical flaw found himself barred. Each delegate as he arrived was invited to dine in private with the Vice-President. Nevertheless, when the conclave opened, with sixty-four delegates on hand (those from remote Ecuador and eastern Venezuela were late), so strong was the hold of Bolívar throughout the vast land that only twenty-five sound Santanderistas were present. Sure Bolivarians were twenty-one; the balance were moderates, most with Bolivarian leanings. Santander lost the first battles on the floor: José del Castillo Rada, a solid Bolivarian, beat him for the chairmanship; a motion

that the present Constitution be amended to favor central power in the executive, the judiciary and the legislature, was carried. Briceño Méndez and Castillo wrote glowing reports to their chief in Bucaramanga: they were winning! Bolívar's response was to tell his staff that his friends at Ocaña were simpletons; of course, the majority of the delegates were on his side; as were a majority of the people. But Santander had the machine, Santander would win. . . .

Gil Fortoul in his great *Historia Constitucional de Venezuela* writes that Bolívar "died" in Peru: a too simple metaphor, but apt to describe the abyss between the man of 1812-1824, who in both war and administration had crystallized chaos to the form of his clear will, and this hesitant statesman a hundred miles from the battle, who discouraged his leaders, predicted defeat — and did nothing about it. Bolívar had veered from a high hand (most recently in Venezuela) to entire aloofness, and was now oscillant between the two extremes, either of which might possibly have been effective. To the men whose strength was that they wanted him to lead, he refused his presence; to the people, he displayed what no people can tolerate in a chief: conflict and indecision. The artist may outdistance his public in order to pursue the universal; the man of state, in Bolívar's own words, "must keep pace with the nature of things."

Bucaramanga was a city of about twenty thousand, on a great green plain from which the mountains rolled in lush groves of coffee to the bleak stone gorges of the Sogamozo, pouring northwest into the Magdalena. Neither high nor low, it had the climate of Caracas. Close to the plaza with its dainty colonial church was a white house of many patios, in Spain's day a barracks. Here Bolívar settled down with General Soublette, his private secretary Colonel Santana, his private physician, Dr. Moore, and a small staff. O'Leary and Briceño were at the Convention in Ocaña; the aides-de-camp Fergusson, Wilson, Andrés Ibarra and Colonel Bolívar (a remote relation), were perpetually on the road bearing mail; Ocaña was a four

or five days' journey by horse along the rim of the eastern Andes, through valleys and across precipitous heights.

One of Bolivar's staff was a Frenchman, Colonel Louis Peru de Lacroix; and through his famous *Diary of Bucaramanga*, we have a picture of Bolivar during these crucial weeks. The Colonel was a soldier of fortune, perhaps a bit more intelligent than the average. He had fought under Napoleon, made the campaign of Russia at his side, and been sent by him to England on a secret mission (disguised as a partisan of the Bourbons). When Napoleon fell, like so many in those wars he escaped to the Antilles; served for a while with Aury, the French privateer who in Haiti had challenged Bolivar; joined the Colombian navy and finally the army. Bolivar had a fondness for European aides: O'Leary, Wilson, Fergusson, were among his most loyal and articulate disciples. Lacroix was a good listener and Bolivar liked to talk to him in French. They read Racine together, and discussed Voltaire; Bolivar enjoyed improvising verse translations *à haute voix*, while the Colonel (who knew Spanish well) listened and judged. After Bolivar's death, the Frenchman got involved in the civil wars of Venezuela and was finally expelled. In 1837, in a cheap Paris room, he blew out his brains with his old campaign pistol. He willed his *Diary* to a Parisian paper. During the afteryears, he had inserted a palimpsest of his own bitter opinions among Bolivar's words; he was no scrupulous historian. The manuscript came into the hands of Bolivar's nephew, Fernando Bolivar, who again adulterated the original record. Fernando, adopted by Bolivar after the death of his brother Juan Vicente, enjoyed a privileged education: Bolivar wrote out rules for his guidance, consulted Thomas Jefferson, sent the young man to school in Philadelphia and to Jefferson's University of Virginia. The product of all this lofty care was a fatuous gentleman of the old school — the antithesis of his tutors — who deemed it his duty to delete from the *Diario de Bucaramanga* any alleged word by Bolivar on Church, morals or politics, which might offend the creole equivalent of Mrs. Grundy. Fortunately, the original manuscripts reveal the "improvements" both of Fer-

nando and Lacroix; a contemporary historian, the Venezuelan Monseñor Nicolas E. Navarro, has brilliantly extracted Lacroix's original account.

At Bucaramanga, Bolivar wore no uniform; he dressed in a blue formal coat, white vest and trousers, white shirt, black tie; and when he went out, his hat was of broad-brimmed straw. He rose at six, retired at midnight, always with a book; and took his afternoon siesta in a hammock. Evenings, usually with Soublette, Herrera and Lacroix, he played cards; and he hated to lose. "Look," he said, "I have lost battles, I have lost much money, I have lost friends — and none of them moved me like losing at cards." He explained this, laughing: to play cards without money makes *amour propre* the stake — and no man, however brave, can suffer injury to his self-love. Every afternoon, there was an excursion on horseback; when the town was behind, Bolivar spurred his horse and compelled his aides (who were his guards) to race him or to lose him. Frequently they lunched at a farmhouse. Bolivar loved fresh fruit, and prided himself on his salads (a skill he had learned in Paris). Of meat he ate sparingly; he eschewed strong liquor, and his glass or two of wine he preferred dry and sparkling. He liked to boast of his physical prowess; he had beaten the llaneros of Páez at swimming and roughriding. This was his hold on them, he said; and his escape from wounds in countless battles he ascribed to the fact that he was ambidextrous and could wield his saber with both hands. Providence? Man's superstitious name, he said, for ignorance-and-egoism. He explained his career (or so the rationalist Frenchman interpreted him) as a concatenation of chance causes: the death of his wife, the Colonies' need of a leader with discipline and perseverance. If it had not been he, it would have been another. His favorite author was Voltaire; Locke, Jeremy Bentham (whom he had proudly met in London), and Montesquieu, he called his intellectual masters. Rousseau had influenced him indirectly through the training of Simón Rodríguez; but when he himself became a pedagogue (in the education of Fernando), he ignored Rousseau and his own teacher. (Doubtless these pre-

dilections mirror those of Lacroix. If Bolivar had admired the great mystic writers of Spain: Saint Teresa, Luis de León, Saint John of the Cross, it would not have registered with the Frenchman. The tragedies of Calderón and Tirso de Molina which symphonize the overtones of human destiny with the blood and bone of action; *La Celestina* and *Don Quixote*, Spain's supreme masterworks of tragic irony, were far closer to his character and his career than the simpler eighteenth-century men who schooled his mind.) He was no longer a strong man, he admitted; but if he had listened to his physicians, he would be long since dead. Why was Dr. Moore with him? Why did he go to church? Doctors and chaplains were luxury-articles, compulsory for public leaders. As for the Church:

The impudence of the holy charlatans! I can't recall without a laugh — and without contempt, the edict that excommunicated me and all my army in 1814, taking as pretext that I'd come to sack churches, burn priests, rape nuns, destroy Religion . . . and all of it retracted in another edict just nine days later, in which I was no longer a heretic but a good and faithful Catholic. What had happened between the two dates? Before the first, I was marching on Bogotá; on the second, I was victoriously entering the Capital.

Of course, as an officer of the people, he publicly respected their faith — but not too scrupulously, since he brought a volume of Voltaire to Mass. What then did he believe?

I don't care for metaphysics, which is usually based on fallacious premises. It's enough for me to know that the soul has the faculty of feeling, which is to say: it receives impressions of the senses but cannot think — I do not admit that ideas are innate. Man, I say, is a material body and an intelligence represented by an equally material brain; and according to present science, imagination cannot be considered intelligence, but rather a secretion of the brain. Call this product soul, intelligence, spirit . . . no matter; for me, life is nothing but the result of the union of the principles: *contractibility*, the faculty of the material body, and *sensibility*, the faculty of the brain or the intelligence. When this union ceases, life ceases. So you can judge my opinion of Elyseum, Tartarus, etc., and my ideas on all the sacred fictions which still disturb mortals. . . .



"This philosophy, Señor" [Lacroix said], "is lofty and I see few men in this country who could rise to it."

Time, my friend, education and the relief from anxiety it brings, and the certain trend of intelligence little by little will initiate my countrymen in natural things, freeing them of their ideas and taste for the supernatural. . . .

This, of course, was the kind of passage which the goodly Fernando Bolívar bowdlerized. But to accept it as basic content of Bolívar's mind would be too simple. According to Lacroix, Bolívar's mood swung between gaiety and gloom. He walked the patios of the house, singing soldiers' songs; and at table one never knew if he would be the gracious host or sit in sullen silence. He feared to be bored — hence his equestrian dashes and the hours at cards. His petulance could be contradictory as a child's: "I have a thousand times more faith in the people than in their deputies. Instinct is a loyal counselor; pedantry is a mephitic air that suffocates good impulses"; but he found the people "slavish by nature," no democratic constitution could possibly wipe out their sense of caste. Colombia he found "morally depraved by the war." Yet the very fact of inequality in men made equality before the law imperative. When he was accused of being a dictator, he was outraged; but Colombia needed a dictator . . . needed a theocracy, whereas, like Rome of the last age, it had only demagogues. He could be childishly egocentric. "Bolivia . . . Colombia," he recited, with a disarming smile, one day at table; "very sonorous and harmonious the second, but how much more the first! Take them syllable by syllable! *Co* cannot compare with *Bo*; *lom* — not near so luscious as *li*; and isn't *via* more melodious than *bia*?" He could be simple. One day, after a hard ride, he, Soublette and Lacroix stopped at a farm and asked the woman for a drink. She offered chairs only to the two uniformed men, and treated Bolívar as their servant. As they were leaving, her two children came in, and Bolívar gave each of them a gold crown, with a doubloon of four pesos for herself. Aware at last of who he was, and frightened, the mother fell to her

knees; but Bolivar lifted her up, asked her about her husband, put her at ease. In the public service, he was always ruthless. Several officers whose incompetence or corruption had earned his disfavor came to Bucaramanga to plead with him. They had traveled hundreds of miles over bad roads; they were in the next room while Bolivar read a book in his hammock; he refused to see them. On one occasion, the visitor was the new Dutch consul on his way to Bogotá. In Cartagena, he had got involved in a shady commercial deal. Bolivar sent his aide through the open door to tell him to report to the Minister of Foreign Relations. The staff, embarrassed, offered the Dutchman food and drink; the consul declined and at once continued his journey.

Bolivar's heart was desperate, he concealed it at times in playfulness; he had followed his conviction of destiny as a man possessed, now he flinched from the pain he had foreseen and turned against it the apparatus of the empirical philosophers. It was the old antithesis of his nature. A deeper man than Lacroix would have observed the hysterical mask in his gaiety, the emotional defense in his denial of the forces that created him, his thirst for shallow waters as the sea he had released roared at his head. A man more widely read than Lacroix would have guessed the relation between Bolivar and Cervantes, who also saved himself from the bitter fire of his love for mankind by the invention of a ridiculous figure.

His wonderful career? "Three wrongs fathered it," said Bolivar to Lacroix: "the wrong" of his wife's death; "the wrong" of his military insubordination (he had disobeyed his superior officer, Labatut, when he marched up the Magdalena from Barrancas); and "the wrong" of his edict of *war without quarter*. He dragged down others with himself. He had "manufactured," he said, the heroic deaths of Girardot and Ricaurte, in order to stir up the New Granadans. At about the same time, he wrote to a friend: "My spirit needs danger that my mind may remain cool. God seems to have immersed me in storm, in order that I may fulfill my special destiny which is *to create*

order." And as the situation in Ocaña worsened; as Santander featly decomposed the majority against him with filibusters, wild scenes on the Convention floor, shrewd exploitation of local interest and of the confusion and fatigue of the delegates, Bolivar wrote to O'Leary: "If we have a majority, let's use it. If not, no compromise, but *fight the field*, arms in hand, and be defeated; for defeat allows recovery whereas capitulation . . . barter the right of self-defense. Absolute victory or nothing, is my banner. . . ."

Bolivar's imaginative genius required a *body of action*. He had inherited it in germ: America's need to be free of Spain. The growing pattern of that action had absorbed his self until self became coterminous with his task. But the task was done, *Opus one*. He had inherited in germ a second body of action: America's need to become a new world, a free and just world. The first *opus*, relatively simple, had engaged the youth of his body and his mind. The second transcended his body and his mind. This was the agony of Simon Bolivar. This, the shallow Lacroix could not see. This was why Bolivar's hard mouth frequently broke in paradox and destructive jest.

At last the Bolivar party in Ocaña knew what Bolivar had known all along: they were going to be beaten. Santander could not get the required two-thirds vote for his loose Federal Statute; but with the middle-of-the-road moderates, whom he had won, he could push through the reapproval of the present Constitution and abolish Article 128, which granted the President extraordinary powers. "If there is no strong government," Bolivar had warned O'Leary, "do not count on me." Santander knew his man. Bolivar would either resign, or flout the emasculated law and declare himself dictator. In this case, the hot-heads among the Liberals — in secret night meetings — had already planned what they would do.

The eight weeks had worn the delegates, and violence was in the air. Bolivar had been reminded, if he came to Ocaña, of the fate of Julius Caesar in the Senate. Luis Vargas Tejada,

one of Santander's best men, idealist and poet, was writing inflammatory verse on liberty and tyrants.

At the very beginning, a delegate had moved that Bolivar be invited to come to Ocaña; the motion was voted down. Bolivar had written a Message to be read; by Santander's devices, it had been postponed for over a week. . . .

Colombia, it began, was in disgrace, fallen from the integrity of war, bankrupt, and in chaos. "Our government is essentially ill-constituted," the powers were not properly balanced. The legislature was sovereign, the executive was subordinate and could not propose legislation. All the strength of the state was in the "will," all the weakness was in "the means of motion and act by which the will is realized." The President could not inspire or collaborate with Congress; he could only contradict it. Cabinet ministers could not enter Congress; lacked authority in their own departments, which were left to the disharmonies of hundreds of local bureaucrats. The law needed a central hierarchy of the courts in order to cohere. Even the judiciary was vitiated by Congressional interference; even the Army, even the Church. And to offset this executive weakness, Article 128 offered discretionary dictatorial powers: too little normal power was compensated by too much! There was not even an adequate police; local leaders, forced to be judges and patrolmen, became local bosses.

. . . Consider that the corruption of the people comes from the indulgence of the courts and the impunity of crime. Consider that without strength, there is no virtue; and without virtue, the Republic perishes. Consider that anarchy destroys freedom, and that unity saves order. . . . *Give us inexorable laws.*

It was a great introduction — and there it stopped. The nature and form of these "inexorable laws," Bolivar left to the Convention. The reason was that he still believed in his own Constitution. The people would have none of it; let them answer. The particular restraint worked a general repression in Bolivar's mind. Yet he knew that only *specific recommenda-*

tions could hold the Convention against the schemes of Santander. He had foretold what was happening. Indeed, two years before, in a letter to Santander, he had written: "*No Congress has ever saved a Republic.*"

At the end of the eight embattled weeks, the delegates were ready to continue the old state, with the one Article excised which gave the President power. Weary and out of funds, they wanted to go home — indeed, many had gone, whom Santander did not choose to finance further. A few final touches, and he was ready to put the decisive vote.

The Bolivarians were in despair. Only Bolivar's sudden appearance could avoid disaster. And then Bolivar's aide rode in from Bucaramanga with a letter. Bolivar had written:

. . . Every victory of my enemies is an immense door opened for me to leave Colombia. And I shall go; a thousand or two-thousand leagues away, the alarms of civil war will sound; but I shall not return . . . a fifth time . . . believe me, to the country which has already so shamefully expelled me.

The faithful Briceño Méndez wrote back to Bolivar:

The enemy, Colombia's and yours, have won their infernal object. They have nothing left to wish for, since *you* no longer hope.

Twenty staunch Bolivarians were left in Ocaña. They too had their desperate plan, prepared in secret nightly meetings. They could not bar the fateful final vote; but with one more man they could deprive the Convention of its quorum. They found him — Frias by name — and spent the last night persuading him. At dawn, the twenty-one stole out of Ocaña, thereby destroying the Convention. On their way to Bucaramanga, where they hoped to find the leader who had refused to come to them in Colombia's dire need (as he saw it), they wrote a lengthy explanation of their desperate act. When they reached Bucaramanga, Bolivar was gone; he had decided it would be unwise to meet them (it might imply he was the author of their act), and was on the way to Bogotá . . . a way

through Socorro, home of the great Comunero rebellion, and through Boyacá.

As he rode, he said to Lacroix: "If I believed in presentiments, I would not go to Bogotá, for something keeps telling me that an event will take place there, evil for me, or fatal. But I keep asking myself also, what is a presentiment? and my reason answers: a caprice of the imagination. Of course, at times events corroborate predictions. Thus coincidence builds credit for superstition; the myriad other cases when presentiment is wrong are forgotten." . . . Slowly riding, Bolivar analyzed the "star," the "daemon," men like Socrates believed in.

Good news met them on the way. The Mayor of Bogotá had presided at a meeting of the citizens, who on June 13 rejected the Ocaña Convention, disavowed whatever it might legislate, and called on the Liberator to possess the nation. In other cities, swiftly, similar meetings. Public opinion had condemned Ocaña before it disbanded. But if Ocaña had failed to create a new basic law, it had destroyed the old one. In the cities, in the hamlets, in the plains and the high valleys, from Margarita to Quito, the Constitution was dead; and no law was ready to replace it. The majority of men, with chaos before their eyes, and no ambition except to live and see their loved ones live, looked to the man who had established the Republic. Now, when Bolivar rode into Bogotá, there were no sullen streets; no placards on the walls offended him with "Long Live the Constitution." The folk gave themselves; it seemed impossible to Bolivar to refuse them.

Terming himself Liberator-President of the Republic of Colombia, he issued a proclamation. The Convention called to amend the nation's law had failed, he said, yet dealt a death-blow to the law. Nevertheless, he as Magistrate must enforce the law; he promised within the year to call a constituent assembly to reform it. Meanwhile, all guarantees under the old constitution — personal liberty, free speech, free press — remained valid; religion would be protected; the economy reformed; the national debts, external and internal, strictly honored:

. . . The sovereign people has honored me as its minister; I must obey. . . . I cannot deny myself to the confidence which at once overwhelms me with glory and crushes me, making me appear as I am.

Colombians, I will say nothing to you of freedom, for if I keep my promise, you will be more than free: you will be respected. Besides, under dictatorship, who can speak of freedom? Let us have compassion upon one another: the people which must obey, and the man who is compelled to rule alone.

## X I

### The Ultimate Challenge

"No one is great with impunity."

S E P T E M B E R 25

A FEW MONTHS later, the night of September 25, in Bogotá's silently sonorous streets, a dozen soldiers and a group of university students marched unchallenged toward the Palace of San Carlos where Bolivar slept and four sentinels stood guard. In the chill moonlight, it gleamed beside the church and across from the intimate little plaza which was a gem of low identical houses with wood porches, overhanging roofs of tile, tooled slender pillars. The soldiers and students went up to the amazed, sleepy guards, and shot them and two aides who came rushing down the steps; they killed the President's two hounds who had begun to bay, raced across the patio giving on the *sala de recepción*, gold-walled with cedar ceiling and gold-mullioned windows, and through a second patio to the room of Bolivar. He was ailing, and had sent for Manuela in their villa just outside the city; she had replied she too was ill; a second urgent message and she came, gave him a footbath and put him to bed. When they heard the shots, the shouts, the baying hounds, Bolivar leaped for his sword; but Manuela stopped him at the door and made him jump from the window fifteen feet above the Calle del Coliseo. Then, slowly, she let



the men in: Bolivar had left hours before, she told them. An officer struck her in the face, another, Florentino González, rebuked him for offending a woman. They saw the bed, the open window, and rushed away. General Fergusson, Bolivar's aide, heard the tumult in the nearby barrack, rounded the corner to the palace, ran into his friend, Pedro Carujo. "What's up?" cried Fergusson; Carujo's answer was to shoot him through the heart. Bolivar with drawn sword ran the steep street to the Calle de la Parra. A servant overtook him; they raced together toward the barracks, but when they reached a little stream crossing a field, the man pulled Bolivar under the bridge; and there for two hours they crouched while mounted troops thundered above their heads, some shouting, "Death to the Tyrant!" others, "Long Live the Liberator." The shouts of "Death!" faded, the "*Vivas!*" prevailed. Drenched and muddled, the two walked to the barracks.

The crime came from Ocaña, from the uprisings in the towns for Bolivar's personal rule, and from his response. He had written to Lacroix:

. . . The Convention's shameful dissolution, the popular revolts—for that of Bogotá will inspire others—are not what I wanted. Such movements do not affirm the Republic; on the contrary, they are blows which not only weaken its foundations but deteriorate the public morale, obedience, and the discipline of the people, inuring them to political chaos, excess, sedition. . . .

And in a letter to General Urdaneta, before he left Bucaramanga:

. . . If I give in to the counsels of the foolish and perverse, I bury myself alive in the ruins of the country; therefore I must vanish or break with the evil. But the latter would be tyranny; and the former—can it be called weakness since I am not weak? If I fight [for strong central government] I win and save the country; and you know I do not hate battle. But why must I fight against the will of good men who call themselves free and moderate? You will answer: I did not consult these same good people when I was

destroying the Spaniards; and to do so, I disregarded popular opinion. But the Spaniards and royalists were tyrants, servile, slaves — whereas those now against me call themselves republicans, liberals, citizens. This is what holds me back and makes me doubt. . . .

Bolívar was in the grip of tragic paradox. The political freedom he had brought required order, the liberties released by freedom hated his method of obtaining order. He no longer moved with the tide of the folk. His actions in Bogotá after Bucaramanga, true in logic to his premise that freedom needed order, were false to the loved image of himself which his deeds as Liberator had created.

Freedom of speech, assembly and the press, he did not touch; and they turned savagely against him. The towns hummed with conspiracy; for the first time in his life Bolívar found himself on the defensive. The University bred rhetoric and license; he changed the curriculum, abolished the liberal texts — even his favorite Jeremy Bentham. Order needed a civil frame; he wooed the Church, restored the Convents which Santander (a believing Catholic) had stripped of their gold and power; in the past he had always insisted that religion be a private matter and no concern of the State, now he called himself “Defender of the Faith.” Santander was hostile; to be rid of him, Bolívar abolished the Vice-Presidency and appointed him Minister to Washington. Santander accepted, and for his Secretary of Legation chose his disciple, the poet Luis Tejada Vargas. Bolívar believed he was quit of two enemies: a tragic error.

Since Ocaña, young Tejada Vargas had dreamed violence. He wrote a long verse monologue, *The Suicide of Cato*, a hymn, barely disguised, against “the American Tyrant” and a call for “the Avenger”: every gazette in the land printed it (here was a “dictator” who left the press in the hands of his enemies); it was recited in every tavern. Tejada Vargas wrote a pasquinade:

Si á BOLIVAR la letra con que empieza  
Y aquello con que acaba le quitamos,

O L I V A, de la paz símbolo, hallamos.  
 Esto quiere decir que la cabeza  
 Al tirano y los pies cortar debemos  
 Si es que una paz durable apeteceemos. . . .<sup>1</sup>

. . . it flew through the land on wings of music.

Tejada was a good poet and a zealot; many of the country's most generous youth stood by him. Passion for Bolivar had become passion against him. They met at night in a *Sociedad Filológica*, an insurrectionary club ironically like the *Sociedad Patriótica* of Bolivar's youth in Caracas. Their reading of history was simple and balanced as Tejada's verse. Against Caesar there had been Brutus; against the reactionary Hamilton of the United States (he too had favored a Life President), there was Jefferson who in the throes of war with England had been horrified when the legislature of Virginia wanted "an emergency dictator." Santander would be their Jefferson and their Brutus . . . their Bolivar against Bolivar. But despite Brutus, Santander was against assassination. His circumspect plan was for revolutionary juntas in every town: cells of ten would choose a captain, tens of captains would form a larger cell; each captain would be responsible for his men whose names he kept to himself so that if any were caught few were involved. At the ripe moment, by Santander's plan, the juntas would rise together against the personal law of Bolivar, who would have to flee the country. But the Philological boys were in a hurry. No, said Santander, Wait! If they "disposed of" Bolivar, how could he succeed him with clean hands? Clean hands were important to Santander, who went regularly to confession. The conspirators had many consultations with their chief, and returned to their nocturnal huddles (from which Santander was invariably absent), heartened yet deterred. They found an answer: it was to proceed, and *then* call on Santander. Soon

<sup>1</sup> If from BOLIVAR we excise  
 The letters it begins and ends with,  
 O L I V A [olive branch]. Symbol of peace, we find.  
 This means, we must cut off  
 The tyrant's head and feet  
 If we want lasting peace. . . .

he would be sailing for Washington. When he was away, he told his friends . . . if an emergency arose . . . he would always respond to his country's call. He was leaving in September; the date for the attack on the Palace was set for October.

Murkier figures were drawn to the plot: Pedro Carujo, the Venezuelan who killed Fergusson and for whom Fergusson had recently obtained promotion; Augustin Hermant, a French Jacobin — hence an authority on revolution; the quack Dr. Argamil, whom Bolivar had snubbed. They were impatient: why wait until October? Bolivar was spending a day in a suburb, a fine chance to kill him. Santander got wind, rode fast, brought Bolivar safely back. The plot was shifted to the Municipal Ball. Santander was sick, but he got out of bed, rushed to the dance, and on a pretext persuaded the President to accompany him . . . saving him again. The conspirators were sure they understood their conscientious leader.

By now the plot was anybody's secret. Bolivar did nothing about it — like Santander! Who shall say what was in his heart and mind? Tejada Vargas was a poet, and Bolivar loved poets. Did Julius Caesar know his own heart and mind, when he encouraged the conspiring Catullus?

Manuela was with Bolivar again. When affairs of state did not hold him all night at the Palace, they shared a charming *quinta* (country villa) east of the city on the mellow slope that rose to the steep height of Monserrate. A path paved with the bones of oxen in square design led through a corridor of trees to the porch; the tiled roof slanted over, shading the white walls. Left of the reception hall was Bolivar's study, and to the rear the dining room. Behind the patio, vibrant with flowers, were the white 'dobe servants' quarters, the kitchens and stables. And at the wing, with a patio of her own, were Manuela's chambers: a canopied bed, a clavecin, two gemlike salons with windows on Monserrate and its lofty chapel. Here, perhaps, Manuela was happy; not in Bogotá which did not like her. Her eccentricities and her bodyguards, Jonatás and Natán, had been indulged in imaginative Quito; had been a delight to sophisticated Lima; to the strait-laced ladies of

Bogotá they were an offense. Society did not receive her. And slander wove cold webs about her: she was a "nymphomaniac," the President's Guard was her "company of lovers," she hated General Córdova because he had "repulsed her advances," etc. In Bolivar's absence, she gave parties which exceeded indiscretion. At one, the effigy of General Santander was set up in the garden and shot at by the guests, including officers. Scandal! General Córdova protested. And Bolivar wrote to him:

. . . I shall suspend the commandant of *Granaderos*, remove him to serve elsewhere. He alone is guilty . . . As to the lovable Madwoman, what would you have me say to you? You know her. I have tried to separate from her, but nothing avails against a resistance like hers. Nevertheless, as soon as this blows over, I am thinking of making a most determined effort to have her go home — or anywhere.

Bolivar lived in a climate of trouble. Peru's new President LaMar was Bolivar's enemy, and had inspired the insurrection in Bolivia against Sucre; now LaMar (a native of the Ecuadorian city of Cuenca) claimed Guayaquil, and sailed north with Peru's navy to take it. What Peru threatened in the South encouraged the separatists of Venezuela in the North; what Venezuela threatened, encouraged LaMar. The Ecuadorians, vised in the threat of war, knew if war came between Colombia and Peru the heaviest burden and the battlefields would be theirs. Only their strong man, General Flores (a Venezuelan barber's son), held them; and who could say what was behind the alabaster eyes of Juan José Flores? The war years had released within the peoples the anarchism of the Spaniards and the festering trauma of Spain's tyranny. Lurched from their traditional orbits, Church and King and Indian ayllu, freed of the magnet of the struggle for independence, their wills ran wild. Each town had its caudillo, its anti-caudillo. In Popayán, the military governor, Obando, was revealing himself a monster of genius; and so deep in the people's substance were his murky webs that Bolivar dared not seize him. Spain, meanwhile, spying from Habana, prepared a fleet for new invasions. Bourbon France was allied with Bourbon Spain. England?

Her interest in Spanish America was broad and devious as her interest in markets. A weak Colombia she could continue to exploit under her hugely advantageous treaty of trade; but a Colombia organized from Panama to Peru? At this very hour, Admiral Sir E. C. Fleming was in Caracas, encouraging the separatists, flattering Páez. . . .

That September 25, chance had crystallized the morbid condition of Bogotá. One of the conspirators, Captain Benedicto Triana, incautiously invited Lieutenant Francisco Salazar to join them; and the Lieutenant did what the former Vice-President of Colombia, General Santander, had failed to do: he went to the police. Triana was arrested. This was early afternoon. The conspirators, alarmed at what Triana might reveal, decided to precipitate the attack, scheduled for October. Whatever Triana confessed failed to alarm the authorities, for the guard at the Palace was not increased and Bolivar was not warned: probably Triana was vague about an open secret. But Tejada, Carujo, Hermant and the others were frightened and moved with feverish swiftness. There is no evidence that they directly told Santander their plan for the night; there is psychological evidence that they refrained, lest Santander dissuade or circumvent them again. But there is reason to believe that Santander suspected: hurriedly, he had taken his sword, left his home and retired that night in the house of his sister. This action saved his life. When, after the attentat, Bolivar and his manservant appeared at the loyal barracks, an officer went at once to Santander's house to kill him. But Santander had already left his sister's house and soon joined Bolivar at the barracks. While the soldiers cheered, the President and the ex-Vice-President walked back to the Mansion of San Carlos!

Manuela bathed Bolivar and put him to bed. Shortly after dawn, he was ready to meet his Cabinet. The man who faced his councilors looked old, his eyes abnormally large.

"I have my answer for this," he told them. "There will be no prosecutions, no inquiries. The President's Guard will be withdrawn. The Congress called for the new year will con-

vene at once to choose my successor. Then I leave Colombia for good; until then, here I remain, accessible to anyone and all."

Castillo Rada, who had led Bolivar's forces in Ocaña, approved with one amendment: instead of leaving Colombia, let Bolivar stay as a private citizen. General Urdaneta said nothing. Bolivar got up and went back to bed.

## THE DECISION

THE DECISION was Bolivar's last act of genius. He must have known its perils: it might cost him his life, it might bring civil war, it would surely be read by his enemies as weakness. Confusion and despair cannot entirely explain it. It had the ring of a word issuing from sudden knowledge, a word of judgment upon himself not less than upon his people, a word which must finally register, even if only when he who spoke had vanished. It said that violence, breeding violence, had failed and must cease. It said that the nation could survive, only if at last the people recognized the psychological truth of their Master who bade them forgive and love their enemies, because this was the one viable way to overcome them. The decision was not unrelated with Bolivar's strategy of battle: to transcend the enemy, choosing the hardest course; by the magic of daring to transmute weakness to power. Bolivar's conscious training had been the rationalist's; now the profound Christian heritage of his culture spoke in him. This was why Castillo Rada wept with joy at his decision.

His nation and union of nations could not yet be, because of immaturities, economic, technological, cultural. These immaturities had treacherously drawn Bolivar into their orbit. From the beginning, in many forms, he had said: "If one man were necessary to sustain the state, that state should not exist, and finally will not exist." His mind knew he could not "dictate" democracy: not impose freedom by paternalism, not ensure peace by the sword. Yet he was engaged in these im-

possibilities! and they had brought, as they must, hate, conspiracy, murder. One did not raise up a people from instinctive chaos by action that was mere reaction within the chaos. But growth is often a great leap! This dark dawn Bolivar knew. His impulse, of course, was not pure; had it been so, he would have acted it out. Even as his dream to forge American union was alloyed with egoistic will, so now his choice to forgive his enemies, and by disarming to disarm them, contained an element of frustration at his failure, and of rage, perhaps, at their injustice. But these impurities prove merely that Bolivar was human (analysis would reveal like motives in a saint). The lust of egoism cannot explain the creator of Colombia, the planner of the Canal and Union at Panama; and the anguish of thwarted egoism cannot explain Bolivar on September 26, 1828, resolved to give himself as a naked hostage to his people, who had not been mature enough to trust him, even as he had not been mature enough to rule them. This was the infeasible salvation open to every soul: beyond the will to power, the direct conduit to God through self-bestowal and self-dedication.

Sucre would have approved of Bolivar's decision. But Sucre was hundreds of miles away, in Quito.

The man who was there, and who that same day returned to the Palace to see Bolivar alone, was Rafael Urdaneta. The General was the last surviving comrade-at-arms of all Bolivar's wars since 1812. He was a monumental man, austere, with inflexible cold grey eyes, the dominant nose and jaw and forehead of a Roman. Never had he flinched in his loyalty to Bolivar. He loved him; and to his soldier's simple mind, Bolivar's decision was the folly of fever. Treason had been committed; the nation's second citizen, Santander, was indubitably involved — and Bolivar intended to let it ride? to sit unarmed while the assassins rose again? Urdaneta went to the Palace, and insisted that the criminals be pursued, the conspiracy burned out. He convinced his old friend. Within twenty-four hours, Bolivar changed his decision.

He declared martial law throughout Colombia; he replaced



the civil authorities with the military in the remotest towns; guarantees of personal liberty were set aside; pursuit of all suspected conspirators was ordered. Fourteen men were brought to trial, hanged or shot. The poet, Tejada Vargas, was tracked like a beast to the wastes and caves of Casanare, where he was drowned trying to swim a swollen river. Urdaneta presided at the court martial of General Santander, who conducted his own defense. Despite his brilliant cross-examination of the witnesses and the court's failure to implicate him directly in the events of September 25, it was clear that he had known of conspiracy, had trafficked with conspirators, and had failed to report to the police. He was found guilty of treason, and Urdaneta sentenced him to death. Bolivar commuted the penalty to exile.

Not for a moment did Santander relax from his rôle of a Christian gentleman grievously wronged. He sat for months in a cell of the fortress at Cartagena: the Peruvians were marching against Colombia, and it was feared that if Santander sailed to exile he would go south and join them. He wrote Bolivar a courteous, unruffled letter: he was a sick man, and the confinement was killing him; would the President be pleased to carry out his order of exile? and, since he was an innocent man, would the President be so good as to publish the minutes of the court-martial, that Colombia and history might judge? Bolivar's reply came down the Magdalena; Santander was released to sail for Paris. . . .

Had Bolivar held to his inspired decision, would his Colombia have been saved? If Urdaneta could not understand, would not thousands have failed to recognize the saint who suddenly replaced the soldier? The question does not make sense; no strand of history can be altered by the mind without garbling the whole to fantasy. Bolivar was Bolivar; and his people were his people. He had grasped at an impulse which he could not hold; an impulse that was in them with their deep Christian culture, and which *they* could not hold. He shared this potential, as he had shared their chaos . . . and as he still shared their political immaturity.

THE YEAR 1829 becomes a grim parody of Bolivar's glory. LaMar with his Peruvians took Guayaquil and marched up into Colombia.<sup>2</sup> Sucre had remained his promised two years in Bolivia; in April 1828 (two days after he was wounded in the rebellion), he had married by proxy, and since September he was living with his wife in Quito. She was Doña Mariana Carcelén y Larrea, Marquesa de Solanda, a *Quiteña* of beauty and large estates. In January, 1829, came the call from Bolivar, making him commander of all the forces in the south and ordering him to deal with LaMar. Colombia had a standing army of thirty thousand; but all of it was useless against the invader. Obando had rebelled, making Popayán and Pasto a barrier by land between Colombia's army and LaMar's; and the Peruvian navy, blockading Guayaquil, barred access by sea. Sucre with four thousand men marched down from Quito. He sent a simple message to LaMar: *Return to Peru*; LaMar ignored it. At Tarqui, near the town of Cuenca, on February 27, Sucre's four thousand overwhelmed LaMar's eight thousand. It was a virtuosic victory; and Sucre's terms for the capitulation followed his rule: they were the same as before the battle: *Return to Peru!* Colombia wanted nothing of her sister republic but that she withdraw her invading army and navy. LaMar signed, went back to Guayaquil — and remained there, breaking his word. But Bolivar meantime had forced a truce on Obando, and moved swiftly south. The remnant of LaMar's army mutinied against him and sailed home. Bolivar in Guayaquil embraced Sucre, who went back to his wife in Quito. The victory seemed complete — and was nothing. For now the enemy was not Spain; it was the American chaos.

In Guayaquil, Bolivar's fever attacked him again. He wrote

<sup>2</sup> At this time, San Martín sailed from France to Montevideo, Uruguay — and waited. His countrymen in Buenos Aires, on the other shore of the Río de la Plata, invited him to the capital, offering him a high post in the diplomatic service. San Martín declined. He had written to LaMar in Lima of his coming and he was waiting for an invitation to return to Peru — presumably to lead the army against Colombia. The invitation failed to arrive; San Martín sailed back to Europe.

to O'Leary (who had distinguished himself at Tarqui and been made a General by Sucre):

. . . Considering what I have been all my life, my condition is incredible; either my spiritual health has greatly fallen or my physical constitution is ruined; what is beyond doubt is that I feel without strength for anything and that no incentive seems able to arouse me. A universal calm, or rather an absolute lukewarmness, has overwhelmed and dominates me, wholly. I am so convinced of my incapacity to remain any longer in the public service that I have felt obliged to reveal to my intimate friends the necessity of my resigning from the command forever, in order that they may make the decisions that seem best to them. . . .

He discusses the state of Colombia. The Constituent Congress, which will meet in three months, must choose "one of the two only courses which remain":

1. The absolute separation of Venezuela and New Granada.
2. The creation of a strong life-government.

The new Congress was to meet in Bogotá on January 2. Meanwhile, everywhere, disorder. . . . In Medellín, General Córdova, New Granada's most gifted soldier (the hero, with Sucre, of Ayacucho), rebelled against "the Dictator" and was killed. (The American Minister to Colombia, William Henry Harrison, was implicated in his plot.) Venezuela was virtually independent, and had convened a congress of its own to formalize secession. Flores in Quito announced that without the balance of Venezuela to the preponderant weight of New Granada, Ecuador would withdraw from Colombia. In Cartagena, Juan García del Río, a minister in San Martín's Peruvian cabinet and his close friend, published a series of *Meditaciones Colombianas*, which argued that a King, presiding with a federal constitution like that of the United States, could alone save the Union. The thesis swept the country, and Bolívar took it seriously enough to answer. The arguments were respectable, he said; but no European Prince would take the throne or — if he took it — keep it. *He* would never descend to a crown; and there was no other candidate. For better or for worse, the

spirit of America demanded republics. He harked back to his old compromise: the Life President. His enemies in Venezuela accused him of preparing his way to the throne, or of plotting to deliver the land back to European autocrats; he would re-enslave the Negroes, make a servant-class of the mestizos, etc. In his call for the new Congress, Bolivar had asked the people freely to discuss the nation's future. This too was held against him. It was "an invitation to anarchy," the country "needed order, not more debates." The Venezuelans saw their subjection to the majority of New Granada, the New Granadans saw their further subjection by Venezuelan soldiers. To be right with his people had become impossible for Bolivar. Sick in spirit, sick in body, he returned from Guayaquil to Bogotá.

On January 15, 1830, Simon Bolivar made his last entry into the capital of the nation he had created; it was the last year of its life, and of his. The city was adorned. He passed through flags garlanding the somber streets, and four thousand mounted troops, lining the Plaza and the Alameda of San Victorino, saluted him. But the crowds were silent. It might have been a funeral procession.

The Congress waited his inaugural and parting word. Sucre (who had had a few more brief months with his wife in Quito) was elected Chairman. Other men of stature were there: among them, Urdaneta, Castillo Rada, José Manuel Restrepo, the great historian, his brother Félix, Joaquín Mosquera, Pedro Gual, Estanislao Vergara, the Bishop of Santa Marta. The gathering was sober, unlike Ocaña; but its hush was not happy. Santander in Paris still commanded the press, and it howled at the Congress, calling it "servile."<sup>3</sup> Many of the conspirators of September 25 had openly returned and were hailed by the

<sup>3</sup> The anti-Bolivar press in both Bogotá and Caracas precociously foreshadowed the totalitarian journalism of a century later — with this difference, that it lied against a "dictator" *who was in power* and who did nothing to suppress it. With Bolivar still there to read, it rewrote history daily: Bolivar "had never won a battle," "never faced a bullet"; the victor of Boyacá was "Santander," Bolivar had been "absent during the battle, breakfasting at Tunja"; Bolivar was "a deserter" from Venezuela, to which "he dared not return," and whose true hero had been the murdered Piar. Bolivar was "booted out of Peru." The war without quarter proved his thirst for blood, etc., etc.

papers as "Granadan heroes." The dissident Venezuelan Congress, meeting in Valencia, disavowed the Bogotá Congress beforehand. Bolivar had ridden in from Fucha, a more sequestered retreat than his quinta (where he had left Manuela). No one, not even Bolivar, knew how sick a man he was; but his worn face and emaciated body were felt as an omen.

This time, at last, his resignation was accepted. (Twenty-two congressmen refused to let him go, but among the majority who favored his return to private life were Urdaneta and Castillo Rada.) Domingo Caicedo, a Granadan of integrity and small strength, was named President *pro tem*, and after the Constitution was adopted, Joaquín Mosquera became President. Mosquera, who had recorded his visit at Pativilca, was a great orator, a moderate; and it was hoped he could successfully balance the extremists of both parties.

There were fine gestures. The new Minister from the United States, Colonel Moore, who had replaced the hostile General Harrison (later to be President of the United States), made a generous speech in which he referred to his own country's trials before it finally found a stable Constitution. The French minister, Monsieur de Bresson, spoke warm words. The Constitution, "admirable" according to Bolivar, called for a President to be elected every eight years, not eligible to succeed himself, and endowed him with normal executive powers. "Sovereignty," it declared, "is rooted in the NATION, whence issue all political powers." This was to reject primordial States' rights. If the powers of a department or province derived from the nation, Venezuela could not secede. Then the legislators, harried by the turbulence outside their hall, stultified their stand. "The basic law," they wrote, "shall not be *forced* upon any section of the country."

At once on his return to Bogotá, Bolivar had decided to proceed again to Venezuela, to win Páez again. The Congress had refused to let him go; now Venezuela refused to let him come. In the Secession Congress of Valencia, hysteria against him ran high. Bolivar was officially declared "an enemy of Venezuela"; Pedro Carujo, who had murdered Fergusson in the attempt on

Bolívar and escaped the hand of Urdaneta, was made "a national hero." The Bogotá Congress chose Sucre and two other delegates to treat with the Venezuelans. They got as far as La Grita (the steep Andean border town where Bolívar eighteen years before had first clashed with Santander); were ordered back to the frontier, and informed that Venezuela would confer with them only if they first recognized her independence, and *only if Bolívar were formally barred from Colombian soil.*

Behind this hate was fear — and love. Bolívar's "war without quarter" had forged the sense of a nation; his realized promise to lead his countrymen to the crest of Potosí in remote High Peru had given them glory. But at what cost? Bolívar had made war with Venezuela's body. Nearly half her humanity was dead, her towns were burned, the ports were green with weeds. And to what end? To shrink Caracas from a capital to a provincial town; Venezuela from a free nation to a subaltern department ruled by Bogotá lawyers! This was not all. Bolívar must make war on Peru, plan the levy of Venezuelan troops against Cuba . . . perhaps Spain? The will for heroism had collapsed. The heroes, headed by Páez, owned huge ranches, and might grow rich, if the war-genius left them in peace. . . . They feared Bolívar because they loved him. His Dionysian voice was their own; if they heard him again, would they not follow him again — to Brazil, to Buenos Aires? Drown the Circean song! abolish it! But even as they shouted, they listened. When the Valencia Congress summoned Páez to lead the new national government, he kept silent for weeks, waiting; fearing and hoping Bolívar would return! No one could believe that a stricken man, Simon Bolívar, was vainly trying to collect sufficient funds to sail away and restore his health in Europe.

Sucre and his commissioners, rebuffed at the frontier, retired to Cúcuta and invited the Venezuelans to come to them. Sucre proposed that for at least four years no General who had held a commission since 1820 be eligible for public office in Colombia. This would have eliminated all the foci of conflict: from Bolívar, Páez, Sucre and Santander down to Obando. It

was a wise suggestion; and General Santiago Mariño, who headed the Venezuelan commission, took it as an insult: a usual response to wisdom. The parley failed; Sucre, wearier than before, turned south again for home.

One motive unified all oppositions to Bolivar. He had been compelled to give up his United Hemisphere with a Canal on the Inter-American soil of Panama; and his Andean nation indivisible from Panama to Chile. He had been compelled to give up his amateur constitution, a pragmatic compromise, he believed, for the discords of America Hispana. All the more fiercely now, he longed to save Colombia, his first-born, his beloved. And here every ego fought him: the local boss content with a village; the "national" politician for whom Venezuela, New Granada, Ecuador, was booty enough; and no less fiercely, the idealist with typical Hispanic anarchist leanings; the man who treasured "personal freedom" and a minimum of government, the "home rule" partisan. Their dreams were honest — and pitted against the grandiose dream of Bolivar.

In New Granada and Ecuador, it was becoming known that Bolivar was "out"; his sole potential successor was Sucre; he alone of all the disciples had the prestige and the genius to carry the cause of Colombia forward. Sucre was the rising enemy of the little-nation men in Ecuador and New Granada. And Sucre, aged thirty-six, wanted only to retire! Bolivar knew that this luminous man lacked one indispensable trait of leadership: *the taste for it*. He was a great musician who hated to play.

Ecuador, following Venezuela, declared her independence. General Flores called a constituent congress to meet in Riobamba. But the generous heart of Quito felt no fear, hence no hate for Bolivar. The citizens of Quito, learning that Bolivar was homeless, offered him a home.

"Come, Your Excellency," their invitation read. "Receive the gratitude and the respect due to the genius of America, to the liberator of a world. . . ."

On his way south to Quito, Sucre went to Bolivar's retreat

outside Bogotá. The two men embraced in farewell. They were hard men, and they had the tenderness of strength. Sucre's eyes filled with tears as he saw the wan face of his chief. Bolivar's heart flinched with pain as he realized that his "son," his sole successor, also was retreating. They embraced for the last time.

On May 8, 1830, Bolivar left the high cold plain of Bogotá, bound for the Magdalena and — if he could raise the funds — for Europe.

He had prophesied: "I will die as I was born: naked." Through his preoccupied hands, personal property had passed whose equivalent today would be millions of dollars. He had freed his thousand slaves and given them the land whose wealth they produced; to his sisters he had given his Caracas home (they had been forced to sell it) and to a needy friend his suburban quinta near the city. His cash and his salaries (when he touched them at all), he had lavished on anyone and everyone: his brother's children, his fellow soldiers. The million gold pesos which Peru had voted for him, he had declined. He had intended to hold the copper mine of Aroa; but now that he needed it, his title was contested in the courts, and he got no penny from it.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, it had placed him in debt, for he had allotted the income (before he had it) to friends in London and Paris. His uncle, Estebán Palacios, was no longer rich (most of the *ci-devant* aristocrats of Caracas were ruined), but he had ten thousand pesos salted away, and offered them to his nephew. Bolivar refused. The Bogotá Congress had just voted him a life-pension of thirty thousand pesos; he refused it. He sold his horses, his household goods, his few jewels, and raised seventeen thousand pesos. Before he reached Cartagena, the money was gone; every veteran on the way had received what he asked. Perhaps (he did not know) he still had a few resources in Caracas; he wrote to Páez and to old family friends to sell what there might be and to send him the cash.

A loss of another kind troubled him far more. As Bolivar

<sup>4</sup> The case was settled a few years after Bolivar's death; the money went to his heirs.



plunged into his American dream, he did not lose his sensitivity to Europe; the new world he envisaged was Europe's child, wherefore the judgment of Europe's mind meant much to him. And Europe had given him the fame he prized most. Now in Paris his old partisans, the radicals, the liberals, the romantics, turned against him. Santander was in Paris, and was doubtless spreading the black legend of the Autocrat. Benjamin Constant, leader of the radicals, publicly attacked him. In *Le Courier Français* of Paris, he wrote:

*Nothing legitimizes illegitimate power. . . . Dictatorship is a grim heresy of the oligarchic republics based on slavery and wielding power through a proletariat deprived of its goods and of its rights. In our present organized economy, dictatorship is a crime. If a people is not sufficiently enlightened to govern itself, it is not tyranny that will give it freedom. Moreover, the appreciation of the wisdom of a people cannot be left to those whose interest it is to picture it as blind or stupid. This is not the first time a nation has been slandered in order to exploit it. . . .*

And the brilliant Benjamin Constant went on, as if he knew that Bolivar's eyes — Bolivar's deeply hurt eyes — were on him:

*. . . I attach great importance to the expression of my thought. For I know that the man I am discussing values the judgment of certain Europeans, and I wish him to know that among these there is one who sorrows at the bloody vulgar course he is taking. It is good that sincere voices should reach him from afar, to disturb the concert of adulation which doubtless resounds all about him.*

### Concert of adulation!

Almost less bearable than this attack of ignorance was the defense of the Abbé de Pradt in the same journal. A wide polemic — all utterly remote from the American facts — entertained the Parisian press. Bolivar hurried documents abroad to reveal the abyss between Constant's romantic simplicities about the people and de Pradt's classic simplicities in rebuttal. "Poor de Pradt," Bolivar wrote to the Minister in London; "he

knows how to praise — but not how to defend me!"

The Paris wits were making light verse of the American tragedy. Bolivar read in the government organ, *La Quotidienne*:

Bolivar, est-il un héros?  
 Oui, dit l'Abbé d'un ton lyrique,  
 C'est le Dieu Mars de l'Amérique!  
 Non, dit Constant à ce propos,  
 Il a tué la République!  
 Et chacun avec sa réplique  
 Partage la foule des sots.  
 Or, donc qui croire, je vous prie?  
 — Tout est bon dans cette anarchie,  
 Dit un jacobin effronté;  
 Contre la légitimité  
 Tout sert, la soutane en délire,  
 Le sophisme du député  
 L'empire de la liberté  
 Et la liberté de l'empire.

Bolivar suffered deeply; he had not succeeded in making himself and his task articulate — even in lucid Europe! He had worked in chaos, chaos had overwhelmed him, but it had done worse: it had blurred his Design, as he wanted History to see it. Doubtless the man's physical ebb contributed to his darkness. His mind was still a searchlight, but it stabbed against fog. . . .

## N I G H T

WITH a small escort, this last May, Bolivar rode to Honda on the Magdalena. From all the nearby towns, the folk came to show their subdued respect for the waning leader. A dance was given in his honor, and Bolivar attended; but the man who had so often danced half the night after the day in the saddle did not dance. The sampans were prepared, one with an awning for shade and with a cot, and fresh fruits and filters to purify the toxic river water. Bolivar stood at the stern and

raised his hat in farewell, then the swift current bore him down the two weeks' journey through the jungle to the sea.

He arrived at Turbaco, prostrate with fatigue; after a forced rest of several days, he insisted on continuing to Cartagena, in order to sail for England. Flags and banners were draped from the balconies of the fortress-city, and the people with sorrowing reverence honored the man who had come there in 1812 and flamed from obscurity to triumph. The British *paquebot* was ready; as it approached the bulwark to take him on board, a strong wind drove it against the rocks. It had to put up for repairs. Another British vessel stood in port, and agreed to take Bolivar to Jamaica, where he could find passage to England. But the captain explained that his orders compelled him to call first at La Guaira, the port of Caracas, then to return to Cartagena. Bolivar was welcome aboard at once, but he feared that his presence in the port of his home city might cause political complications. He decided to wait till the ship returned. Moreover, no funds had come for him. He gave a letter to the captain, who promised to deliver it in Caracas. The reply to it, he said, would be money. The captain delivered the letter; the ship returned to Cartagena; but there was no money. . . . Meantime, more intimate events barred Bolivar's sailing for England. . . .

The government of President Mosquera and Vice-President Caicedo, struggling to hold above the factions, was soon crushed by them. An incident electrified the storm. One of the regiments garrisoned in Bogotá was for the Congress and Colombia; another was rabidly partisan for Santander and "free New Granada." To avoid their clash, Mosquera ordered them disbanded; they refused to dissolve. Then he transferred one to Tunja in the north, and as it marched it unleashed civil war. Mosquera, whose health had collapsed from the strain, retreated to his estancia; Caicedo, at heart a "little nation" man, fled the country. Out of the turmoil, the officers loyal to Bolivar, the uncompromising Colombia men, emerged; their leader, Urdaneta, formed a provisional government and hurried an envoy to Cartagena to draft Bolivar.

For his enemies, all this had been "prearranged"; but Bolivar knew nothing of it. He was not in touch with Urdaneta; in his address to the Congress, he had slighted his old comrade by not naming him among those to whom the Republic owed most. The unjust omission (the steadfast Urdaneta had served no less usefully than Sucre) can be explained only by the resentment a man feels toward a friend who, however loyal his motive, has persuaded him against his inmost nature. After September 25, it was Urdaneta who drew Bolivar down from his exalted moment; Bolivar had concurred, but a depth of him dissented and regretted. Now, because Urdaneta was too good a soldier to allow a personal hurt to deflect his judgment in the midst of battle, he called Bolivar back. This was the last chance, as he saw it, the one last chance to save Colombia — and Bolivar was the expert at turning defeat into victory. Urdaneta did not know the moral and physical condition of Bolivar.

He was living outside the walls of Cartagena, near La Popa, the steep rock six hundred feet above the sea where the nuns of Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria had their ancient convent. It was cooler here, and Bolivar loved the vitality of the folk in their disheveled huts, between the rock and the sea. The streets, thick dust or mud, were verdant with romping naked children; the nights flared and swelled with the songs, the guitars, the *cantina* aromas of seafood and alcohol. The dancing often burst into the streets: the whites, the mixed-bloods, the Negroes, the fishermen and boatmen pacing with bare feet, had their individual numbers, but as the evening ripened into carnival, they mingled. Bolivar had dismissed his doctors; the complex figures of the dance with pirouettes and subtle twirling bodies and gesticulant kerchiefs and flashing eyes, were medicine enough. Sometimes the Indians came in from their fields and played their pipes, *gaitas*, in unison with the birdsong flutes, *currulaos*, of the Negroes. In this florid air of Cartagena, Bolivar was waiting for the ship to bring him funds from his lost home, to carry him away to his last exile. And here, on

July 1, his friend, General Mariano Montilla, burst in on him with the news of the death of Sucre.

When he had embraced Bolivar in farewell on his way south to Quito, Sucre crossed the great plain to Neiva and La Plata, following the habitual route of the armies; then traversed the central cordillera, skirting the jungle of San Agustín, where the stone records of man's terror as he wakes to consciousness still lay unknown; and came to Popayán. Here Sucre must choose one of two ways to Quito. He could turn north again through the rich and easy valley of the Cauca to Cali, cross the brief western range to Buenaventura, sail to Guayaquil and thence climb to Quito. Or he could go due south through Patia and Pasto. This was the shorter route, but full of peril. Sucre himself had twice suppressed the inveterate rebels of Pasto; Bolivar had fought here his bloodiest campaign. It was the land of lethal jungle and more lethal men, who loved to dispose of their captives in a ceremony called "wedding": two were bound face to face and then hurled down the craters of volcanoes. It was the land of the chief of this spawn of two war-decades, José María Obando, most treacherous of Bolivar's enemies — and Sucre's.

All the way down from Bogotá, Sucre's friends had urged him to take the safer, longer way. In Popayán, the local commander pleaded with him; but Sucre was in a hurry to return to his wife, whom in six years he had lived with six months; and to his daughter, whom he had hardly seen. Then the commandant urged him to wait a single day, while he arranged an adequate military escort for the Marshal of Ayacucho (Sucre's official title). Sucre smiled and declined; he was a private citizen now, he said; he ranked no pompous guard.

From Neiva and from Popayán, express post-horses had brought the news of Sucre's course to Obando. The local press reported that Sucre was going south "to raise an army against New Granada . . . to enthrone Bolivar or himself." And *El Demócrata* of Bogotá said:

Letters from the south inform us that Sucre is marching on Pasto with an army to attack it. But the valiant General José María Obando, friend and sustainer of the law and of freedom, is rushing to head him off, with the aid of Pasto's invincibles. *And it may be that Obando will do with Sucre what we failed to do with Bolívar.*

This appeared in the issue of June 1. On June 2, Sucre's "army" (himself, his friend José García Trelles, deputy from Cuenca at the last Congress of Colombia, two sergeants, the manservant of Trelles and two barefoot Indians urging along four pack mules with the luggage) reached an inn near the dank forest of Berruecos: a crude thatch house owned by José Eraso and his wife. Almost overhead, the *salto de Mayo*, a leap of waters from the mountain, roared perpetual alarum through the dark wood. Eraso, with clouded eye under a low and matted brow, was "a man of all work" for Obando; a bravo whose years of violence the leader had rewarded with the title of "lieutenant colonel of militia." A few hours after Sucre and his party, another visitor put up at the inn: Colonel Apolinar Morillo. He brought two letters:

Buesaco, May 28

My esteemed Eraso:

The bearer of this will tell you of an important business, which it is urgent that you do with him. Hear what he has to say to you, and you direct the blow.

Yours,

JOSÉ MARÍA OBANDO

The second letter, from Obando's man, Antonio Mariano Alvarez, repeated Obando's instructions and corroborated Morillo's credentials.

Early next morning, Sucre paid Eraso, who stood in the door with his squat Indian wife and watched the little party take the trail past the waterfall, whose alarum seemed at once to submerge them. Four hours later, they reached La Venta, another inn of thatch and mud, and the last before the trail pierced the black heart of Berruecos wood. As Sucre reined his horse at the postern of the inn, there was Eraso.

"You must be a magician," Sucre smiled. "We left you in your house, you did not pass us on the way, and here you are!"

Eraso mumbled an evasive answer about a short-cut and "business." Now came other guests to La Venta: Commandant Juan Gregorio Sarria and three men armed with muskets who remained in the corral with the mules and horses. Even in that land of murderous fanatics, Sarria stood out; his master Obando could not rival him in subtly rationalized evil. On one occasion, suspecting a sixteen-year-old lad of intimacy with his wife, he bound him to his bed and castrated him. The lad was well-liked in the community, and Sarria was brought to trial. He explained that he had intended to cut the boy's throat, but the Virgin Mary had appeared and told him what to do. He was acquitted.

Sucre invited Sarria and Erasó to drink a *copa* of brandy with him; he suggested that they remain the night at the inn and dine with his party, but this they declined, and left at sundown. Sucre and his men gave arms to their two muleteers, and passed the dark hours in vigil. But when the sun rose from the mountain, their anxiety vanished. They breakfasted at leisure, paid, and entered the dark wood. In the van went the pack-beasts, the two Indians and one of the sergeants; then García Trellez and his man, and in the rear, Sucre with the second sergeant. The trail threaded beneath steep forested slopes which drained into its narrow trough. A shot rang in the trees; then from the other side, a volley. While the beasts broke and the men scattered to turn and fight, Sucre fell from his horse and lay dead on his face in the mud.

When Bolívar heard, he struck his forehead with his fist; and alone, the remainder of that day, he paced the patio of his house. He knew <sup>5</sup> who must be the author of this political assassination, although he never learned its details: not for ten years were they divulged, through the confession of Erasó and

<sup>5</sup> In a letter to General Herrán, written in Barranquilla, October 11, 1830, Bolívar categorically states that López and Obando "assassinated Sucre." This phrase had been crossed out by another hand and the letter was published without it in Vicente Lecuna's edition of 1930 (volume X); he reinserts it in the 1948 edition (volume XI).

his wife, and of Morillo; and then only because of the couple's chance arrest on another charge. Fearing they might need them in self-defense, they had saved Obando's letters, including the cunningly veiled order which Morillo had delivered, and the draft for one hundred and fifty pesos, the pay of the three men brought by Sarria for the actual shooting. For ten years, conscience bearing the face of Sucre smote their crass souls. But the penetration of Bolivar must have touched the true mystery, which was not that murder had been attempted on Sucre, but *that Sucre had not guarded himself against it.*

The victor of Pichincha, Ayacucho, Tarqui — the virtuoso of the carefully reckoned chance against high odds, had let himself be felled by a handful of hoodlums. This was the mystery! It must mean — this lapse of vigilance, this failure of control over base matter — that deeply *Sucre did not want to live*, or to put it more precisely: that he was willing to die. Consciously, Sucre longed for peaceful years in Quito with his wife; unconsciously, he must have known that his life could not be peaceful. Bolivar knew that Sucre's was a vaster constellation, a deeper orbit. No less than Bolivar, he was a function of America. His death was as meaningful as had been his victories. Bolivar emerged from his meditation in the patio, knowing his own doom.

And now, the desperate call from Urdaneta! . . .

Bolivar's response, by letter and proclamation, since it was neither a clear "Yes, I am coming back!" nor a blunt "No!" has confused the chroniclers into believing that he hesitated; that power again drew him; that he temporized until the moment for his re-entry ripened. But the truth of this last phase of the man is more complex. Bolivar declined to take command, because he did not approve the insurrection which had placed Urdaneta at the helm; because he did not believe in his own sufficient strength; and because he had lost hope. But he could not, by an absolute rejection, discredit or weaken Urdaneta's effort to save Colombia; nor could he under even hopeless circumstance deny Colombia his hand and his blood. Therefore, to Urdaneta and his commissioners who had come



to Cartagena, he promised “. . . to serve my country in so far as I can, as citizen and soldier.” And to the people, he proclaimed:

*Colombians*, the disasters which have reduced Colombia to anarchy force me from the peace of my retirement to offer my services as citizen and soldier. Many of you have called on me to contribute . . . I promise with gratitude to meet your confidence to the extent of my powers. What strength I have, I offer to collaborate in the reunion of the Colombian family, now submerged in the horror of civil war. But it is you who must save yourselves by rallying to the government which the public danger has summoned. . . .

The government was Urdaneta's; the purpose of these words was not to take power, but to re-inforce it. Yet he had no hope for Urdaneta — even as he had predicted the fall of Mosquera. Perhaps in the arcana of Bolivar's mind, lurked the dream of a miracle: a reborn Colombia with himself at the head (there had been “miracles” in his career). But he spoke his true thought in a letter to Estanislao Vergara, now Urdaneta's Foreign Minister:

. . . No, my friend, I cannot go [to Bogotá], nothing obliges me to go, for no one is obliged to act against his conscience and the law. Neither have I contributed in the least to this reaction [Urdaneta's *coup*] nor compromised anyone to make it. If I gather the fruits of this insurrection, I am responsible for it. Believe me, I look on insurrection with no kindly eye; lately, I have even deplored the one we made against the Spaniards. . . .

You will say this contradicts my proclamation and report to the government. I reply that Santa María made me see, you would all split into a thousand parties and the country would be completely ruined, if I *roundly* refused; so I dissimulated, vaguely promising to serve as citizen and soldier. I did not neglect to make clear to Urdaneta that I was not coming to Bogotá, not taking command. . . . I deceived only our enemies, lest they finish with you swiftly. . . .

I have compassion for General Urdaneta, for you, for all our friends who have involved yourselves without hope of a good solution. . . . Never did you have the right to count on me. . . .

One word more to clarify everything: All my reasons are based on one: *no espero salud para la patria* [*I have no hope for the country*].

This feeling, or rather this intimate conviction, drowns my will and drags me to cruellest despair. I think everything is lost: fatherland and friends . . . in a quagmire of disaster. If it were a question of a sacrifice . . . of my life, my happiness, my honor, believe me, I should not hesitate. But the sacrifice would be futile; a man can do nothing against a world. . . .

No funds came . . . Bolivar was not strong enough for the long voyage to Europe . . . not strong enough perhaps to leave his country while one spark of hope remained that it might still imperiously call him. . . . Bolivar was restless and wandered. From Cartagena, he returned to cooler Turbaco; back again to Cartagena, city of fear and danger; finally to Barranquilla, the noisy port of the lower Magdalena; and thence to a place called Soledad, which means *solitude*.

Over its low dwellings loomed a church with three great domes. But all of it was lost in the plain of grey grass and sparse grey trees fusing with the river into sky and ocean. Here, Bolivar lived his October and November. At the moment of dusk, the larks pierced from the grass into the swift-darkening sky; and the green earth sighing became a murmur of night, before the larks could descend, and died beneath them.

Across the bay from the Magdalena's murky mouths lay white Santa Marta, a town in its stolid manner as royalist as passionate Pasto. A few miles from Santa Marta, a Spaniard, Don Joaquín de Mier y Benítez, had his estate, San Pedro Alejandrino. Don Joaquín, who was forty-three and a native of Cadiz, had been a royalist, but aloof from politics. He was a rich and enterprising man, the owner of ships and of the first steamboat to ply between Santa Marta and Barranquilla. He learned of Bolivar's state, and sent him fresh fruits, vegetables, wines. Bolivar wrote to thank him, and invited him to call; but Don Joaquín did not care to exploit Bolivar's gratitude. Instead, he offered him his house at San Pedro Alejandrino: the cool air of mountain and sea, he said, would restore him. . . .

## X I I

### Mountain and Sea

"I shall die as I was born: naked."

"Sad as our death may be, it will surely  
be gayer than our lives."

IN BARRANQUILLA, Bolivar had been forced to call a physician. For months he had tried to cure himself, dreaming of a retreat to Europe, to the blue mountains of Jamaica — nearest of all, to the cool heights under the snowy range of Santa Marta. Whether Dr. Gastebondo knew this was a doomed man is not on record; he cheered his patient, prescribing a diet and a regimen of baths. Bolivar could not climb the stair of his house without the arm of his secretary, his nephew Fernando, or of Miranda's son, who had recently joined him. He had violent headaches, which he ascribed to his constant reading; and suffered from rheumatism and liver attacks. But he insisted until the last on walks alone.

Perhaps irony and his sense of the dramatic urged Bolivar to accept the hospitality of Don Joaquín de Mier y Benítez, former Spaniard and enemy; now like himself private citizen of a dying country.

On November 27, Mier's two-masted brigantine, the *Manuel*, warped at the docks of Barranquilla to receive her passenger. He was too ill to go aboard. Finally, on November 29, young Miranda and Fernando carried Bolivar up the plank to his chair on deck, and the square-rigged vessel, with a jib at the prow and a leg-o'-mutton at the stern, took the broad waters of

the Magdalena. The sun made green mist of the shores; the shores receded as the sea came nearer. The sailors hushed their customary work-songs, impressed by the illustrious supercargo. The *Manuel* was escorted by a corvette-of-war of the United States navy, whose captain had decided on this courtesy. And as the day swiftly died, Bolivar saw the sun encarnadine the snows of the sudden Cordillera, standing as if knee-deep within the waters.

Out of the river's Boca de Ciénaga . . . mouth of marsh . . . the two ships struck the tough waves and adverse wind of the bay; and it was nightfall of December 1 before the brigantine, having signaled thanks and farewell to the U.S.S. *Grampus*, glided into harbor. All the way, Bolivar, nervous and querulous, regretted he had come. "I should have gone to Cartagena. . . . I should have sailed to Jamaica . . . my English friends would have given me money. . . ." But he doubted funds would arrive; and it was too late to change his route. He watched his own veering mind, and saddened at this proof of malady.

The loveliness of Santa Marta moved him. He saw the two cliffs — symmetrical half-folded arms, white rock at their height, grey trees with reddish earth at their base — embrace the conch-shaped beach, the old Spanish fort at the rock's center, the white squat town over whose balconied mansions loomed the massive tower and dome of the Basilica. Don Joaquín was there to welcome him, with two physicians.

One, an American surgeon, soon vanished and leaves no name; the second was a robust, resolute, bearded young Frenchman, disciple of the famous Dupuytren of Paris: Dr. Alexandre Prosper Révérend.<sup>1</sup> Révérend diagnosed pulmonary and meningeal tuberculosis, and kept his finding to himself. He urged Bolivar to go at once to Mier's cool country place. Bolivar wanted to climb higher into the mountain. The estancia would be a "temporary step," counseled the good doctor.

<sup>1</sup> Born in Normandy, 1796. Graduate in medicine of the University of Paris. His liberal politics made him emigrate in 1824. He refused any remuneration for his services from Mier, and later from the government of Venezuela. Died in 1881.

On December 6, Révérend sat beside Bolivar in the leather-hooded back seat of a ponderous *berlina*, and they jostled and tossed along the dusty road. The semi-barren land with sere yellowed grass and clustered stocky cactus greened as it rose into vales of coconut, cocoa, cane and battalions of banana. The heavy hills were grappled with palms. The house of San Pedro Alejandrino stood behind a curtain of great trees: ceiba, tamarind, higueron, campano; its porch with three plain pillars led to a tiled cool hall flanked on either side by chambers and ending in a patio, one of whose wings was the dining room, furnished in proud mahogany and a service of blue Sèvres.

Bolivar's room with one window faced east toward the Sierra Nevada. It had a four-posted bed with its canopy removed (the dry season required no *mosquitero*), an old Spanish carved-leg table, and in the corner a bookcase.

The doctor put him straight to bed, against Bolivar's protest that he was better. But early the next day he was up and wandering through the patios and in the shade of the trees, turning his wan face toward the mountains.

A euphoria of confidence possessed him, while the doctor carefully trimmed his freedom. He dictated many letters, all lucid and logical upon their false premise that he would soon be well. Urdaneta and Justo Briceño had had a falling out; he wrote them both: for Colombia's sake they must be reconciled. There had been a revolt in Rio Hacha, eastward on the coast from Santa Marta. He analyzed the cause: hate of Cartagena; and expounded as a remedy "the lesser of two evils: jurisdictional separation of both Santa Marta and Rio Hacha" from the great seaport. A number of officers had arrived from Venezuela, unwilling to accept the fission of Colombia. He wrote to Urdaneta, recommending that they be sent back to spread the gospel of union in Venezuela. "All signs are hopeful," he said. With little variation, each letter closed with the refrain: "I have been very ill, but I am better. With this change of climate, I shall soon entirely recover."

He wrote again to Urdaneta about the trouble with Briceño,

urging "prudent forbearance until *I or the Republic* finds itself in a position of power to take the necessary steps": a slip of grammar that reveals much.

The next day he sank into a coma. Révérend, at his side, heard his continuous soft wailing.

"What is it? What hurts?"

"Nothing," Bolivar answered without waking.

When he regained consciousness, the Bishop of Santa Marta was beside him. It was time, the prelate explained, to take the Sacraments of absolution.

Bolivar studied him, and said: "Come back for my answer."

The Bishop was reluctant to leave.

"Go!" Bolivar commanded sharply; and sent for his aides, Fernando, Robert Wilson, young Miranda.

"What does this mean?" he asked them. "The Bishop seems to think I am dying."

The young men had no courage for this kind of crisis.

"Call the doctor," he told them.

Révérend explained that the Liberator was no private individual; this was a fitting formality; he had known many a patient who lived for years after the *viaticum*. Bolivar read the honest, guarded face of the physician, and knew he was going to die.

When the Bishop returned next day, Bolivar surrendered to the Church. He called a notary and dictated his will (when he spoke his wish that his body be taken back to his native Venezuela, his eyes filled with tears). He sent a last message:

TO THE PEOPLES OF COLOMBIA,

COLOMBIANS:

You have experienced my efforts to plant freedom where tyranny had flourished. I have worked with devotion, giving up fortune and peace. And when I learned that you doubted my unselfishness, I gave up the command. My enemies abused your confidence and undermined what is most sacred to me: my repute and my love of freedom. I am the victim of my persecutors, and they have brought me to the grave. I forgive them.

As I disappear from your presence, love moves me to express my

last wishes. I claim no other glory than the consolidation of Colombia. All of you must work for the inestimable good of the Union: the people, by heeding the *de facto* government to avoid anarchy; the priests, by their prayers; the soldiers, by defending civil rights.

Colombians, my last vow is for the Fatherland. If my death helps to heal faction and to integrate union, I go down in peace to my grave.

Hacienda de San Pedro, in Santa Marta.  
10 December 1830; 20 of Independence.

SIMON BOLIVAR.

An X-ray examination of Bolivar, when he lay sick in Pativilca of what was called "tropical liver complaint," would almost certainly have revealed scars of an old tuberculosis. His mother died of it, the portrait of his father suggests the consumptive. In his early years, before his genius possessed him, Bolivar was the type of narrow-chested, intense, hypererethic youth who burns out quickly and dies of what was then the occupational disease of poets and artists. Bolivar's "hard and gemlike flame" steeled and transfigured him. His incredible endurance in the saddle, his physical equality with the toughest cowboy, his prowess in swimming and mountain-climbing, were that work of will which, according to Lázaro Cárdenas, is the true strength of the soldier. He seemed impervious to bullets; not one touched him in the hundreds of battles where he exposed his body among the thousands who fell. He seemed impervious to attempts on his life; of the narrow escapes at Jamaica, Casacoima, Rincón de los Toros, and on the night of September 25 in Bogotá, any single one would have appeased the law of chance; together, all these deliverances bear the sign of destiny — of *organic* unity with his work; and Bolivar, despite his rationalist skepticism, knew it. What they summed to, was the premise that while he had work to do, he lived; and the conclusion, that when his work was done, he would die.

When he was ill, as at Pativilca, and knew his work required his continuance, he recovered — and conquered. But the failure of his health as he drifted down the Magdalena, in reverse of his flaming leap in 1813, bespoke his sense that as a *living*

*man* he was finished. Venezuela and Ecuador in revolt, Peru turned hostile, Argentina indifferent and isolate, Sucre murdered . . . these were "difficulties" not distinct in essence from those he had fought. He was "the man of difficulties." As his faith in his living died, his faith in the testimony of his life replaced it.

The historians are wrong who write of his wearing himself out with the violent years of action; or of the cumulative disappointments of his last years breaking his body. In an organism so exquisitely attuned to the organism of his world, the truth is subtler. "We have ploughed the sea," he told his weeping friends. This loss of faith in his bodily work was loss of life; it meant he would die, because he was no longer equipped to go on living. But the peace of his last days — after the Bishop and the doctor had pierced his euphoria of delusion — reveals that Bolivar had a sense of himself which may be likened to the organic knowledge of the grain of corn that it must die in the earth in order to live.

Nevertheless, the knowledge of death shocked him. His body had got used to survivals and recoveries; it rebelled as a child rebels against the burden of maturing. He fell into sudden slumbers; and emerged into spurts of consciousness and effort. In the hall, the officers suffered and wept; he called them in at times, and comforted them and joked with them. Some details he did not know; for instance, that Dr. Révérend, while he was still in Santa Marta, had sent for the best doctors of Cartagena to come and collaborate with him, and not one had answered; or that in distant Quito, when the citizens learned of his financial straits, they had raised six thousand pounds sterling and were hurrying it to him (it arrived too late). He did know that his tough comrade, General Montilla, sat all day in the patio weeping and pounding his fist on the bench, unable to believe this final insult to his hero. And until the end, he was aware of the political vortex raging around him.

In his sleep, he groaned frequently, and always denied that he felt pain. Once, when Révérend questioned him, he suddenly asked:



"And you, what did you seek in this land?"

"Liberty," said the doctor.

"You found it?"

"Yes, General."

"You've been luckier than I. I have not yet found it." He paused a moment. "Go back to your fair France. The tri-color is waving again." He had in mind the July Revolution.

Keeping careful watch from the patio, they left him alone in his room when this was what he wanted. There was no reason, Révérend explained, not to humor him while he died. To those who had campaigned with him, known the constant tension and pain of his years of glory, there was a new quality in Bolivar: a relaxed peace, which awed them.

He would wake from comatose slumber, and get out of bed, and lean against the window, looking out. To the east lay his country, to the south his Continent. The land, dark under the dazing sun, was a long low shoulder. The greens, the contours of ridge and ravine, configured like tendons and muscles of a shoulder pressing forward. Suddenly, the motion was perpendicular; the earth leaped into the Sierra Nevada of Chunduy and Guardián; splintered in the ice of the Pico Plateado: silver against hard blue sky, nineteen thousand feet above the immediate ocean, the highest jet of earth in all the world so near the sea. The dying man saw the glacial summit, cold in the sun, and the hot base: the dark, hot red of earth, the dark, hot verdure. The titan contrast was the symbol of the Nation he had dreamed to forge; perhaps as the view touched his exquisite dying sense, he knew it for a symbol of himself. What union could there be of this exalted rock and the low earth? *Yet they were one!* But in the diapason of conflict. He was happy now, because he was no more present . . . he was gone already. All his life had been a tension, a suspension of nerve and will between this height and this depth. Suspension . . . transition: this was the Cross of life on which he had hung. Dwelling in the red fertile earth of appetite and power, dwelling in the dream of a union of brothers which was cold because the planturous earth of men's experience could not reach it.

He had dwelt entire in neither realm, dwelt suspended. And of the unresolved transition, he was dying. But the drama of this transition . . . his own, his people's and the world's . . . would kindle a light to lead; as the view from this last window upon earth gave him vision. There was a relation, he knew, between pain and light; pain was the fire of transition, and fire was light. Sea, low earth and height, must strive to be one; and never could be one; and in the striving were united. This was man's story. But here on his Continent, how extreme were the separate integers, longing the more, for their extremity, to come together! extreme as the jet of the Sierra sudden from the sea. There it was! Gate to the Continent whose chaos of opposites in race and passion had struggled in him to unite!

He must grope back to his bed. And his eyes closed, his brain again clouded. The doctor came silently, and heard through the stertorous breath Bolivar's last words:

*"Vámonos! Vámonos! . . . esta gente no nos quiere en esta tierra. . . . Vámonos, muchachos! . . . lleven mi equipaje a bordo de la fregata."*

"Come, let's go! let's go! . . . the people do not want us in this land. . . . Let's go, boys! . . . carry my luggage aboard the frigate."

The agony was long, but not strained. At last Dr. Révérend called in the watchers, that they might see the end. At one of the afternoon, December 17, 1830, Simon Bolivar stopped breathing.

It was a month before the certain news reached the cities of Venezuela. The Governor of Maracaibo, Juan Antonio Gómez, printed a proclamation, and had it posted on the public buildings:

. . . An event . . . which should produce incalculable good for the cause of Freedom and the people's welfare: Bolivar, genius of evil, torch of anarchy, oppressor of his fatherland, has ceased to exist.

## X I I I

### The Hundred Years

"It will be said that I freed the New World, but it will not be said that I achieved the stability or welfare of any of the nations."

"I fear for the present and for the future generations."

#### THE INHERITORS

IN 1881, *El Pasatiempo* of Bogotá published a reminiscence of Bolivar signed "P.," perhaps the initial of Victoriano de Diego Paredes. "P." had seen the great man at the Municipal Ball of 1829, the last attended by Bolivar:

. . . The Liberator . . . his short frail body . . . was the man who dominated that frivolous scene. The striking note of his face was its severe disquiet, its disagreeable expression despite the regularity of the features. Physiognomists claim that hardness of heart mars beauty, but in Bolivar the lack of benevolence seemed to stem less from his nature than from his suffering. The face of a man who is being tortured by slow and cruel pain will have an unpleasant expression that seems to come from the heart. His broad deep-furrowed brow and his great restless eyes were strangers to his smile; eyes and mouth never smiled together, and the discord meant pain. The man was ripe and destroyed before his time, ready to vanish . . . no longer of earth, a shadow. . . .

According to "P.," Bolivar stood in a corner of the hall surrounded by officers and officials. Although "P.," a youth at the time, heard clearly what he said, the old man who published the account does not claim to recall the exact words:

"Conflicting interests for many years will bar the consolidation of the country. There will be all possible variety of government until the Anglo-Saxons democratically invade the Hispano-American possessions and form a monster nation that in time will dominate the American seas and carry the civilization and economy of Europe to the great Continent. America's destiny is grandiose and deep, but first it will pass through all the changes of the people of the Middle Ages. I have brought nothing but independence; that was my rôle. The nations I have founded after long agonies will vanish to become states of the great American Republic. . . ."

In this record refracted by years, it would be vain to try to seize the precise thought of Bolivar. How deeply suffering had corroded his own vision, no one can say: Don Quixote on his deathbed repented his crusades, but they live no less nobly because he shrank from them; the *Summa* of Aquinas would still stand if the legend were fact that he finally disavowed it. What Bolivar . . . the living, not the dying man . . . meant by "great American Republic" (if the words are his) the Panama Congress sufficiently reveals. His plan included the United States; he envisioned a *hemisphere* of united nations (including Haiti, the Negro republic); "not one would be weak in respect of another; not one would be stronger . . . and in the march of centuries, there would be perhaps one nation covering the globe—the Federal Union"; each unit voluntarily relinquishing as much of its sovereign rights as must be in order to ensure the whole. Slavery was to be abolished; in all disputes, arbitration would replace war; a common armed force was to enforce the peace. Finally, according to his plan, with the defense secure against the aggressive European Powers, the initiative would be taken and the reactionary nations, beginning with Spain, would be "democratically invaded." We know by his notes that this was the minimum program of Bolivar (the symbol of the sacrifice of national rights was his offer to internationalize the Isthmus). We know also that Bolivar was aware that his plan, at least in his lifetime, would fail. He felt the negative will of the United States, which would not actively participate in the Congress and frowned on his planned liberation of Cuba and Puerto Rico. He real-

ized that Henry Clay's "American system" would inevitably expand. "All Americans should have but one country," was the word of Bolivar. As clearly as if he had actually heard or read it, he knew the answer of John Quincy Adams: "As to an American system, we have it; *we constitute the whole of it.*" In this proposal of an action he knew must fail, Bolivar stands forth as the hero in a tragedy; as one who knew the ultimate triumph of his values beyond his individual failure, he was a prophet. Probably he sensed that the drive of the Clay-Adams system, already reaching for Cuba, would bear southward. Perhaps he foresaw the day when the fusion of American values, north and south, revived by the urgency of a new dangerous age, would transfigure what Adams meant by his "American system" . . . the day for the dawn of his own. If so, Bolivar becomes a prophet for the United States no less than for America Hispana.

All his life Bolivar had prophesied. Of the First Consul he said in Paris, "the rule of Bonaparte in very little time will be tougher than that of the little tyrants he has overthrown." He predicted New Granada's fall to Morillo and said "I will come back." He sketched the political traits of the future Latin-American republics in his Jamaica essays. He foretold the battle of Carabobo: "within twenty months, there will be a second Boyacá in Venezuela, but no second Barreiro to capture, for General Morillo is too smart to duplicate the surrender." Of Iturbide, the ephemeral emperor of Mexico (who impressed San Martín), he foresaw the fall and violent end. At the mouth of the Orinoco with not even Angostura in his grasp, he spoke of his triumphs in Potosí. These predictions were not mystical or magic; they were extended analyses of fact. Also they were subjective. While the man's lyric impulse was in tune with the rise of his people, his detachment held him always a step ahead of the event, and his "good news" expressed both him and his people. When the chaos was released and his waning power to cope with it blurred his detachment, his dark words expressed both the actual condition of the country and his own

submergence. "We have ploughed the sea," he told his friend Montilla; he was now less conscious of the potential structure of his world than of its present darkness. He was an articulate, uninhibited man, who wrote thousands of letters, hundreds of articles, addresses, notes. He urged Santander not to permit his correspondence to be published since it was "much disordered." Dictated to secretaries, several at a time, his letters often mirror a moment and a mood, and unlike the calculated words of most writers and public men, they are full of contradictions. Their prose, never flawless, at times is the best Spanish of the epoch; but in their fugitive expressiveness they are often closer to the notes of a Walt Whitman than to the deliberate papers of a statesman — Jefferson's, for example, to name the one public man of the United States who in intellectual scope ranks with Bolivar.

The letters reveal that Bolivar could be noble and ignoble, an egoist and a man aware of and transcending his egoism, a martyr of devotion and a monster of pride. He could love and despise the same individual; he could be hypocritically shrewd (as so often with Santander) and at the same time impetuously open. In his life-work, not in the hour-by-hour texture of his years, he was an integrated person. But his repeated prophecy of the dark "hundred years," of the dolorous "two or three generations" beyond his death, belongs to his life-work; for his own end and Sucre's were part of the enactment of this vision. In his failure, no less than in his triumph, Bolivar was geared to the American reality; in his will to free America and to make it the City of Man, not more than in the tragic collapse of the methods and tools with which he strove to build it.<sup>1</sup>

The America which Bolivar freed was an America in which he could not live. Of this truth, his own end and Sucre's were the symbol. His heirs were his enemies: the Obandos, Santan-

<sup>1</sup> In less violent terms, the last years of Jefferson and his dark forebodings express the analogous tragedy of "good intentions" in the United States. In 1820, Jefferson wrote: "I regret that I am now to die in the belief that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to the country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passion of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be that I live not, to weep over it."

ders, the chaos-men like Páez. This also he foresaw; this also belonged to his creative drama.

Archetypical was Obando, the assassin of Sucre, Bolivar's chosen heir. A year after Bolivar's death, Obando was Provisional President of the republic of New Granada!<sup>2</sup> He did not remain long in office. In 1840, when the confessions of his henchmen implicated him in the murder of Sucre, he was permitted on his word of honor to go south to defend himself in court. He broke his word and started a revolution; he threw all New Granada into a turmoil; he tried to implicate General Flores of Ecuador and General Barriga, who had married Sucre's widow; finally he fled to Peru, where he organized an almost successful invasion of his country, while writing a book to exonerate himself and to prove that he, not Bolivar, was the true national hero.

In intellectually far higher terms, Santander's subsequent career reveals the same chaos. One of the first acts of New Granada's anti-Bolivarian régime when it had overthrown Urdaneta, was, like Venezuela, to pardon all the survivors of the September 25 conspiracy; to restore Santander to his rights and riches, and then to elect him President. From 1832 to 1837 Santander, home from Paris, ruled the land with cold head and hand. Insurrections were ruthlessly stamped out; if there were executions, Santander attended, as after Boyacá when the Spanish General Barreiro and the thirty-eight officers were shot in the shadow of the Cathedral. At the same time, he funded the national debt, fostered education, liberalized the laws. His countrymen with reason made him the national hero, for his schizoid character expresses them. Virtuous and "a man of laws," as Bolivar called him, Santander concealed from himself his moral implication in the plot to kill Bolivar; cultured and religious, in the suave grand manner of the Renaissance princes, he was treacherous and cruel. (In contrast, Obando recalls not the cultivated bravos of the Italian cities but the

<sup>2</sup> New Granada, separated from Venezuela and Ecuador but still including Panama, changed its name back to Colombia in 1861.

cutthroat caesars of late Rome.) As in Santander, so in his people the contradictory traits became stratified. Below was the mass, exploited, submissive — unto this day. Above in the large cities: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena, Popayán, was the polished class, divided in their devotion to Church or Liberalism but united in love of letters and fine living. This division, general in all America Hispana and indeed throughout the world, became in Colombia an almost absolute cleavage. The two parties, Conservative and Liberal, represent factions of a minority that is divorced from the people, whose votes they woo through the rival rhetorics of Church or secular "democracy," and from whose basic problems they are both remote. The lack of contact with the toiling nation is compensated by a hysterical factionalism always near violence and by the escape of an exquisite culture open to those who need not struggle for bread or for government posts. Literary forms like the social novel, which demand the mingling of intellectual and folk, do not exist in Colombia. The nation's two classic novels, *María* of Jorge Isaacs and *La Vorágine* of José Eustacio Rivera, have this in common: their one character is Nature; their human figures are puppets abstractly representing the passions. But in "pure" verse, Colombia has been supreme from Poe's disciple, the romantic José Asunción Silva (who committed suicide), to such moderns as Guillermo Valencia, Porfirio Barba-Jacob, Jorge Rojas, Eduardo Carranza and the scintillant León de Greiff: technical peers of Verlaine, Valéry and Rilke. Absent is the breathing substance of great literature. And the same is true of the Colombian plastic arts. From Mexico to Chile and Argentina, the vitalities of the people have informed their painting and building; virtuosic Colombia is the one exception. This schizoid stratification has other symptoms. A split people is repressed, and the abuse of alcohol, the endemic custom of riot and murder, are releases from repression. Political assassination is common in "urbane" Colombia; the intellectual class of no other American country, except the United States, is so addicted to heavy drinking. Blood and intoxication break the monotony of the pendulum swing from



Liberal to Conservative, and from one literary mode to another. The violence of 1948, when the people, enraged by the murder of their Liberal leader, Jorge Eleazir Gaitán, burned the heart of Bogotá, is not more typical of Colombia's schizophrenia than the fact that no searching analysis, no constructive thought, followed the frightful outbreak.<sup>3</sup> The people remain in suspension — await the shattering upheaval which will fuse them. The deep values of the Indians in the valleys, of the Negroes in the mines, of the Hispanic fathers, have as yet no modern voice: like the profound sculptures of San Agustín, they are buried. Colombia is a stratified chaos, and its patron is Francisco de Paula Santander, the virtuous lawyer who loved to witness executions.

Páez against Santander parallels Venezuela against New Granada. Santander studied law in the rigid Seminary of Saint Bartholomew; the school of Páez was the flood and drought of Apure, the domination of wild horses, of wilder llaneros, of the earth-eating aborigines. He was a man and a chieftain before he learned to read. Thrice President of the Republic of Venezuela, for thirty years he was in and out of power, exiled and home again, always part patriarch, part child. The oligarchy flattered and used him; he was vain, volatile and lustful, but he was also loyal to his shifting loves and humble before beauty. (He became an amateur violoncellist and a patron of music.) He had no intellectual apparatus, like Santander, to keep him from feeling guilt when he was guilty, hence his braggadocio, his frequently mendacious autobiography, and his troubled veneration for Bolívar. When he was old, he took a friend to the battlefield of Carabobo. "There, stood the Liberator," he began his story, and was silent. Tears filled his eyes, his lips trembled, perhaps he was thinking not of the victory whose glory was so largely his own but of his part in the final defeat of Bolívar. With no word more he rode away. The sentimental anecdote reveals the man who, for all his sins, never lost organic

<sup>3</sup> Also typical, it may be added, was the fact that the crowds who destroyed the handsome principal streets of their city, sparing not even the loveliest examples of colonial architecture, broke into gasoline pumps for fuel, into hardware stores for arms and into public offices to destroy the records, *but did not touch the banks.*

touch with both the crude loam of his folk and its highest spirit. This was why Bolivar, who could never trust him, never ceased to love him. (Bolivar had trusted Santander and never learned to love him.)

Whatever Páez felt or did, involved his entire being, and his people are like him. Venezuela had been poor, neglected; when toward the close of the eighteenth century it began to prosper, war bled it with a violence not equaled elsewhere on the Continent. And always it was flayed by the hot sun, stifled in torrent rain. The folk were robbed, tortured, murdered; but their integrity was never broken. An inviolable nucleus resisted and produced great men. Out of the organism of Venezuela, energized by calamity, came Sucre, Simón Rodríguez, Miranda, Andrés Bello, Soublette, Urdaneta, Gual — scores of soldiers and statesmen who were the spearpoint of continental freedom . . . came Bolivar, their consummation. Venezuela's hundred years after Bolivar were lacerated by revolution; the folk had formed the habit of war; with the Spaniards and royalists gone, Venezuela went on fighting herself. Farms remained weeds, mines collapsed, the desert and the jungle spread, streets and roads were overgrown, and the burned houses moldered, while the fighting went on. Typical of the country's stasis was the fact that slavery, so often outlawed by Bolivar, did not finally cease in Venezuela until 1854, forty years after Bolivar's promise to Pétion! But the heart of the folk did not split, Venezuelans did not become a schizoid people. A certain splendor of integrity informs them even at their worst, as in Juan Vicente Gómez, who became their lord in 1908 when the oil fields began to flourish. Gómez in his hideous way was a great man. He stole a fortune (reckoned at two hundred million dollars) from the nation's revenue; upon scores of concubines he begat scores of children; he crushed the rebel poets and students, setting them to work in chained gangs to blast roads from the stone mountains or manacling them in cells too low for them to raise their heads. Yet the infallible intuitions of Gómez, which for thirty years sustained his rule, prove he was close to his people. At the other extreme of the

scale of values were his enemies, the artists and intellectuals, not exquisite weavers of Nothing like the Colombian poets but virile illuminators of Venezuela's reality, such as the novelist Rómulo Gallegos, the admirable poets and prose men and the painters, who sublimate the passion of Venezuela into forms precise and tender as the human body. Men of this caliber are products of an unfissioned ethos.

South of New Granada, in what became Ecuador, the land of volcanoes and of gracious form, there came similar revolutions, scimmages of liberals with the Church, and the Army oscillant between them. But the principle of order endured. Here too, beneath the political chaos, there has been organic contact between intellectuals and folk; whence a school of vital lyric art and the pungent Ecuadorian novels of social revolution. The part of the folk in the political upsets of the hundred years is largely that of a veto: the folk saying to each premature faction as it reaches office: "This is still not ours." <sup>4</sup>

## THE OUTCAST

TWO MEN and a woman had, with some intimacy, shared Bolívar's life; each shared his symbolic fate: Sucre in his death, Simón Rodríguez and Manuela Sáenz in the misery of their survival.

Rodríguez had written in his farewell letter that, without Bolívar, there was no place in America for Bolívar's teacher. He outlived Bolívar twenty-four years and he did not return to Europe, where he had prospered. Bolívar's death found him penniless in Peruvian Arequipa. Ten years later, he founded a small candle factory in Santiago, Chile. In the same building he kept school; on the door was the sign:

AMERICAN LIGHTS AND VIRTUES: —

to wit: Wax Candles, Patience, Soap,

Resignation, Heads erect, Love of Work.

<sup>4</sup> Today, the liberal and devoted administration of President Calo Plaza, the choice of a free election, indicates the beginning in politics of a creative fusion of intellectual and folk.

He had become the archetypical American crank. But in his philosophy of education, Rodríguez resembles John Dewey. His precept: "Every right derives from society and every obligation is referred to it. The child in school must learn to work and live as a social integer," might have been signed by the author of *Democracy and Education*. Rodríguez was an environmentalist, a pragmatist long before the word was invented. His method too was one of liberation from old disciplines grown rigid and rancid. If he was a crank, it was because his time neither nourished nor sustained him. This, the difference between the fates of the men: John Dewey honored by his world, Rodríguez impecunious and "queer"; the different destinies of genius when it grows in ready or unready soil. Rodríguez never prospered, never stopped from wandering. After Santiago, he set up his pathetic little schools — and candle factories — in the Ecuadorian towns of Quito, Ibarra, Latacunga, again in Peru, again in New Granada. With him went his manuscript on education: "American Societies," and his apologia for Bolívar: "The Liberator of South America and His Companions-at-arms Defended by a Friend of the Social Cause." He breathed no word against his great friend; even when he was hungry, he refused to exploit that relation. He tried everywhere to get his books published, and always failed, and had no funds to print them.

The old man was not sentimental. He said: "I who desired to make the earth a paradise for everyone converted it into a hell for myself." And "I loved freedom more than welfare." Andrés Bello, the Venezuelan humanist who had also taught young Bolívar in Caracas, met Rodríguez in Chile; in 1850 the Colombian writer Manuel Uribe Angel corroborates the impression of Bello: Rodríguez at eighty was "still athletic with broad shoulders and ponderous chest. His brows and hair were white, he walked with legs apart like a sailor and wore his spectacles on his forehead." A ruin, brave, proud, monumental. At eighty he was writing a new book, "The Earth and Her Inhabitants" — no less! He was going, he said, to the United States or Europe to get it published, since no editor in

Bogotá, Quito or Lima would have it. "But," said Don Simón "when I think of quitting America I am like a lover who has quarreled with his mistress. With a feigned smile he walks away, swearing she is already out of mind . . . walks away with feet of lead, waiting for her to call him back, sure at each step she will call him. . . ."

Finally Rodríguez, who had always called himself *Robinson* after the hero of De Foe, wandered into Paita, a port of Peru near the forested coast of Ecuador, a small town on a conch-shaped bay of sand garlanded with woods, through which coffee, tobacco, fruits and cotton are shipped to the Pacific. The dusty streets had wooden houses with porch and thatch roof, and in one of them the old man Rodríguez sat long hours with a woman.

She was fifty-five and grown obese; as she presided in her invalid chair, attended by two old Negro women, Jonatás and Natán, her mien and handsome head made it appear to all who saw her that she was sitting on a throne. Rodríguez told Manuela that he had lost all his manuscripts in a fire; he would have to begin again. To be near his old friend, he settled in Amotaje, a neighboring hamlet, and there he died, aged eighty-five: Manuela had herself borne by her two servants to the funeral.

Bolívar's death had purged her of her extravagant vitalities; tempered and constrained her to her heroic essence. On his last journey, he had left her in Bogotá, where she actively supported Urdaneta and pleaded, along with him, for Bolívar's return. According to legend, when she learned Bolívar's death, she tried to kill herself (like Cleopatra) with the sting of an adder. This story, retailed in the memoirs of the shallow Dr. Boussingault, whom Bolívar had imported from Paris to head a technological institute in Bogotá, is undoubtedly false: if Manuela had decided to die, she would have died. Urdaneta was overthrown, Bolívar's enemies held the city, Manuela was given thirteen days to leave. She refused, a squad of soldiers enforced the order. With her two inseparable women and her chest of Bolívar's letters, she took refuge in

Jamaica, where Maxwell Hyslop, the good merchant who helped Bolivar in 1815, gave her funds. She wrote to General Flores, master of Quito, asking him to send her the accumulated interest of her dead mother's estate. She received no answer; when in 1834 (she was forty) she sailed to Guayaquil and began the long climb to Quito, the soldiers of Flores turned her back and she was exiled again. Her half-brother, José María Sáenz, opposed Flores in an abortive revolt, and the Venezuelan strong-man of Ecuador had him shot. Manuela sailed from Guayaquil to Paita. Two years later, Flores, more secure in power, rescinded the order of exile, but Manuela was too proud to return to her home city while the executioner of her brother governed it. Small sums from her mother's estate occasionally reached her, but she earned her living by making fruit preserves which fetched good prices on the boats at call in Paita harbor. The townsfolk soon learned to love the former mistress of Lima and Bogotá. Young parents asked her to be godmother to their babes. All the boys, she named Simón. She collected stray dogs, and these she christened after the unfaithful generals of Bolivar: Páez, Córdova, Santander, LaMar, were fed their bones and scraps of meat by her two servants. From time to time her fabulously faithful husband Dr. Thorne, still flourishing in Lima, implored her to return; she declined. He sent her money; she refused it. When the Doctor died in 1840 (murdered on a dark street of Lima), his will made her chief legatee of his fortune; she would not touch it.

Old Natán died; Manuela replaced her with another Negress, La Morito. In her humble home, a cauldron of preserves simmered on the stove, and close to her invalid chair stood the stout chest of Bolivar's letters. She refused to show them or to speak of Bolivar except with Rodríguez. Among her visitors was the Italian liberator, Garibaldi. He reported: "I left her with tears in my eyes. Doña Manuela is the most gracious and gentle lady I have ever known." She was a queen by her own right, now.

In December, 1859, when the dank winds of the Humboldt Current chilled the coast of Peru, there was consternation in

Paita. Doña Manuela was suffocating from an infected throat. She died of diphtheria, and in the fumigation of her house Bolívar's love letters were lost. . . .

The fate of these two, a man and a woman of good will, friends of Bolívar's youth and his great days, emblemizes the fate of their kind in the public life of the new nations' first century. The republics had statesmen of high stature: Domingo F. Sarmiento, the schoolmaster-President of Argentina; Manuel González Prada, the poet-socialist of Peru; Eloy Alfaro, the saint-politician of Ecuador; José Martí, Cuba's inspired martyr-poet; Benito Juárez, the great reformer-President of Mexico . . . are a few of the century's conspicuous disciples of Bolívar. But the prevailing power belonged to the exploiters of chaos, to dictators such as Rosas of Argentina, Castilla of Peru, García Moreño of Ecuador, Santa Anna and Porfirio Díaz of Mexico: heirs of Páez, Santander, LaMar, Obando. . . .

## X I V

### The Unborn

"For us, the fatherland is America."

#### R O M E   A N D   S P A I N

CONSTANTINE, the first Christian emperor of Rome, murdered his son, had his wife strangled in her bath, and when the nails of the true Cross of Christ were brought to him, reforged them into a helmet for himself and a bit for his horse "to ensure victory in battle." If Isabel, mother of Spain's empire, had acquired the nails of the true Cross, she would have built a Basilica to guard them and knelt before them. Yet when she listened to Columbus, that nervous, grasping mariner — to his plan for turning the dark half of the globe toward Christ by westward passage to the Indies — the Queen was not above armed men and horses, provided her priests blessed them. . . . The conquistadores were of the people of Spain. Pizarro, a bastard, had been a swineherd; Cortés, a poor law student at Salamanca. They were peasants sick of their overlorded farms, burghers of stubborn towns, portionless younger sons, intellectuals, criminals, saints. For seven hundred years, their Christian fathers had upheld war on the Arab, then the Moor, winning Spain town by town, province by province. And through the centuries of flame, there had been fusion with their foes: Celtiberian, Visigoth, Berber, Arab, Moor and Jew fought, yet lived together. The Cross absorbed the ferocity of the Crescent; and when it thrust Islam's last army from Spain



beyond Gibraltar, the same passion of the same mobile Cross turned west and pried America open. The Spaniards found themselves in a world overwhelming and fiercely strange; they responded with fear . . . the cruelty of fear, the lusts of fear, and with a superstition: that they had conquered and must always conquer because of their Cross of Christ. . . . A very small step in man's bloody march toward Peace: these twelve hundred years from Constantine to Isabel!

Nonetheless, the Cross spoke. Its true voice was silently heard in the breasts of thousands of men as they lay on the strange American earth, too hot, too cold, sated with blood and passion, and afraid. The first historic word of the Cross in America came from Antonio de Montesinos, a Dominican, the Sunday before Christmas, 1511, in the crude log church of Hispaniola on the Island of Santo Domingo. "I am a voice crying in the wilderness," was the monk's text, and he assailed his congregation: "You are in mortal sin, you live and die in it for your cruel, tyrannous wrongs against these innocents. By what authority have you waged hateful war upon this people dwelling peacefully in their own land? By what right do you oppress and exploit them till they die? or rather, kill them outright with your greed for gold? Are they not men? Are you not bound by Christ to love them as you love yourselves? I say to you: no Moor, no Turk is more certain of damnation." The outraged listeners sent protests to Madrid; soldiers threatened the Dominicans, and their prior calmly said: "Our brother will preach again, on Sunday." The multitude assembled to watch the monk eat his words, and were flayed by an even stronger summons to give up their slaves, disgorge their booty.

Among the moderate majority shocked by Montesinos was Bartolomé de Las Casas, a priest living at ease on his Cuban land with his own Indians to serve him. Three years later, suddenly Las Casas heard the voice of the Cross, and gave up his Indians and his acres. He was forty years old; his remaining years (he lived to be ninety-two) are an epic of devotion stupendous as the Conquest itself.

The thesis of Las Casas was simple. The Papal Bull, he held,

which gave the Indies to the Crown, authorized the Spaniards to convert, not to exploit the natives. Neither Pope nor King had temporal rights in America, save in so far as the Indian, becoming Christian, acknowledged the overlordship of Rome and vassalage to the Crown as Rome's agent. Conversion must be free, he maintained, force merely damned the converter; conversions *en masse* were void. The Spaniards must make restitution for every robbery; that was the premise of salvation. The Indians were children on the threshold of reason and could be saved only by good example. Las Casas foreran the eighteenth-century romantics in his esteem for the Indians as men of nature. Potentially, he said, they were more devout than the pagans of classic Europe; the Aztec blood sacrifice, for example, was "a crude intuition of the Eucharist." He declared war on the *encomienda*. By legal theory, the Spaniard took the land and the service of its dwellers *in return* for the bestowal of the Faith; in fact, the soil was stolen, the dwellers enslaved and broken. The Spaniards, before they possessed a village, were required by law to read aloud a "treaty" which promised salvation in exchange for submission. Wrong was this "Requirement," Las Casas said; sinisterly farcical, the procedure of mumbling uncomprehended words, often miles out of earshot, at times on board the ships before the Spaniards landed. The *encomienda*, said Las Casas, must be abolished; every man who abused an Indian must be denied absolution until he changed his ways; unarmed priests must be sent to live with the inhabitants and win their hearts. With the way thus prepared, Spanish farmers (not soldiers) must come to dwell with their brothers and share their science with them.

In torrents of words, scores of tomes, Las Casas drove home his argument. He went to Spain and pleaded and debated. He tried his method of colonization on the coast of Venezuela, and it failed: his farmers were not content to farm, and the Indians had already been conditioned against good example. At this early stage, Las Casas, accepting Aristotle's theory that some men are born for servitude — perhaps the Africans — countenanced the introduction of a few Negroes to America as slaves.

He soon learned that Negroes also were "natural human beings"; for ten years he returned to meditation and repentance in a monastery — and emerged more active than ever. In Guatemala he conducted an experiment of peaceful conversion among a peculiarly hostile untamed tribe. It had resounding success for several years; then, while Las Casas was in Spain pleading their cause, the Indians rose and murdered their spiritual fathers. In Spain, a vast polemical literature sprang up. The opposition, headed by the Humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, held that the Indians were "intermediate men," whom only servitude could succor and save. The *encomenderos*, less than ten per cent of the Spaniards in America, of course hated Las Casas. The balance of the half-million who emigrated in the first half-century from Spain and who were comparatively voiceless, having failed to seize land and slaves, shared the fury of their leaders against "zealots and fanatics." For in their want of worldly goods, their "superiority of blood" was their dearest possession.<sup>1</sup> But the Court and the high church officials listened with sympathy to Las Casas. The old man became a symbol of the bad conscience of Spain.

Queen Isabela's great Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, who wore a hair shirt beneath his priestly splendor and slept in a bare cell hidden in his palace, gave Las Casas the official title of Protector of the Indians, named him Bishop of Chiapas with control of all Central America; sent his disciple Domingo de Salazar, even more radical than Las Casas (he had barely escaped death at the hands of the Mexican *encomenderos*), to the Philippines as commanding Bishop of the islands. In the great debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda, the Court permitted the fulminations of the former against the Empire, and banned the latter's defense of the Imperial conduct — a defense based on Aristotle's apologia for slavery. Two considerable histories of Peru were written at this time: Diego Fernández followed Las Casas in praising the Incas; Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, influential friend of Peru's Viceroy, attacked the Inca régime, exalted the rule of Spain. The former work was

<sup>1</sup> As in a later age with the poor whites of our South.

published by the Court; the manuscript of the latter was filed — and never saw the light until exhumed centuries later by a German scholar. The Court for a time suspended further conquest in America and seriously considered a “mandate system” which would turn Mexico and Peru back to their native lords as soon as they revealed themselves “mature Christians.” Later, expeditions were again licensed, but as “pacifications,” not conquests. The King instructed his best doctors of the universities to study the problem of “just cause” in the Indies. Fray Francisco de Vitoria, professor of law at Salamanca, came out with a revolutionary doctrine: the Pope had no right to grant America to anyone; the infidel Indians by natural law possessed their own land and could resist conversion if they wanted; the equity of Spain’s presence in America was based solely on the universal right of immigration, persuasion and free speech. (The Indians, Vitoria declared, had an equal right to visit Europe and to convert the Spaniards to paganism.) *Vitoria was not molested for his doctrine*, which grew in prestige and, a century later, flowered in the international law of Grotius. When the extremist Vázquez de Menchaca attacked both parties of the Great Dispute as hypocrites, branding every justification of Spain’s presence in America — even that of Las Casas — as a mere blind for lust of conquest, his work was also published and circulated freely!

The greatest evidence of Spain’s bad conscience was the “New Laws of the Indies,” issued in 1542. This was the year in which Copernicus published his *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*; and his transfiguring vision of man’s place in the physical universe was not more startling than the ordinances of Europe’s mightiest monarch on behalf of his subjects. The *encomienda* was abolished. No Indian could be a slave; Indians in servitude were summarily freed. There must be no peonage. Hours, wages, working conditions, were to be standard and controlled, with no distinction between Indian and Spaniard. Pregnant women must not work; dangerous occupations such as mining and pearl-fishing were to be safeguarded.

The New Laws, when they reached America, aroused revolt and fury. Peru's Viceroy, attempting to enforce them, was murdered. Mexico's powerful *encomenderos* (many of them religious orders) openly refused to obey. The laws collapsed; Spain was compelled to whittle them away, and then to let them die. Even the attempt to limit the *encomienda* to two generations failed. New lords had established their power in America's Spains, and the most Catholic King was helpless against the economic forces that sustained his empire. The immediate motives that had borne the Cross beyond the seas prevailed over the Cross.

Yet it was there! The Indians' trauma through invasion, the Spaniards' trauma through their exposure to a strange, dangerous land, the Negroes' trauma through abduction and enslavement . . . mingled their toxic ferments. But the principle of Christian love was in them; in blood, confusion and crime, it began its long tragic labor.

Américo Castro<sup>2</sup> has marshaled scholarly proof of an old intuition: the pervasive Semitic element in Spain's method. There is the Arab factor (not to be confused with the later less significant influence of the Moors): it is the mobility, the warrior-chivalry, the aggressive individualist objectivity of the Spaniard. And there is the principle of *echad* — Hebrew for *unity*, the Jewish will to unite knowledge and conduct, divine knowledge and human conduct, and unto death to resist their separation. In Jewish life, knowledge of God is bound to man's experience by Revelation: God reveals Himself and speaks to man in order that his daily deed (the six hundred and thirteen commandments) be the enactment of knowledge of Him. But the influence of Jewish thought on Spain . . . Bahya Ibn Paquda, Maimonides, Gabirol, Crescas, many others . . . was really a *confluence*; due less to the Jews' five active centuries in Spain than to the appropriateness of their spirit to Spain's need. Stoicism, that earlier attempt to unify man into the wholeness of nature without the middle term of Revela-

<sup>2</sup> In his book *España en su Historia: Cristianos, Moros y Judíos* (Buenos Aires, 1948).

tion, was also Spanish; Seneca and Marcus Aurelius were of Spanish stock. The intensity of Spain's drive toward integration came from her lack of it. Already Strabo, the Greek geographer, had observed the separatism of the Iberian tribes, "the most warlike of the barbarians," whom Rome needed to conquer one by one. The Peninsula is broken into mountain and valley, desert and garden — like little Palestine and huge America Hispana; and Celt, Berber, Phoenician, Greek, Basque, Jew, Athanasian Roman, Arian Goth, personified this telluric turmoil. Integration was Spain's imperious necessity. After eight hundred years of civil war between the Moslems and the Christians, the imperious need became the imperial will. In the caravels of Columbus and the conquistadores, with their horses and guns and priests, it crossed the ocean.

Spain's clumsy theodemocratic version of *echad* did not work; wider and more violently rigid grew the abyss between knowledge and public deed in Spain and in Spain's realms. But no Hispanic world can be predominantly secular. In the American Spains, under the armor of institutions, burgeoned a life of intimate relations: man with man, man with woman, man with earth, man with God. It is obvious that no colonies of other European countries produced arts comparable with the architecture, sculpture, painting, and humble folk dance and music of Spain's and Portugal's realms. It is less obvious that this superiority denotes a human wholeness common and profound.

But the divorce of the knowledge of man's brotherhood in God from the field of public relations brought havoc to the Spanish soul. Havoc brought anguish. A record of this anguish was *Don Quixote*, the knight of the sorrowful countenance whose need to enact the knowledge that men were brothers, by bringing justice to the divided modern world, made him ridiculous — and holy. In the early nineteenth century, the anguish, grown acute, produced a final document: the later work of Goya. Its monstrous terror is more than the response of genius to the Napoleonic wars; more than the suffering of a man who

has lost the Christian firmament and found no other ground;<sup>3</sup> it is the agony of Spain whose bread of unity has turned to stone. Isabela and Felipe had pursued the impossible task of forcing a brutal empire into the City of God. Their methods were primitive, and they failed. But error and defeat are less deadly than self-stultification. When the heirs of Felipe II abandoned the theocratic task in favor of the motives of a secular state, they maimed the Spanish spirit. Spain receded from Spain; Spain receded from history.

A phase of her millennial life was dying, but Spain had not destroyed herself. Her vitalities, transfigured, were reborn in America. The great arts and the folk arts of Spain's America prove this; the intimate life of the Hispanic people prove this . . . and above all Bolivar. Bolivar, who ignored the great Spain of the theodemocratic kings, was their successor. Their spirit lived on subliminally in the people, and now again it rose, embodied in a chief.

With Bolivar, Spain enters history again.

# " G L O R I A "

THE IMPERIAL . . . the *Spanish* imperial quality . . . of Bolivar is obscured by his own terms. Bolivar's conscious education stemmed from France and England, whose empires lacked the concept of organic wholeness. France became Cartesian; gave lip service to divine knowledge and lived by empiricism. Of this dualism, Descartes made a logic; England, more instinctual, dispensed with the logic and adhered to a public life of secularism while her poets and priests aspired apart to transcendent realms. The spokesmen of dualism: Newton, Locke, Burke, Descartes, Montesquieu, Voltaire . . . were Bolivar's intellectual masters. It is clear to us how primordially Spanish was his dream of a hemisphere united; but the modulation of his terms hid this from himself.

<sup>3</sup> André Malraux's superb study of Goya, *Saturne*, interprets the horror of Goya's final work as the result of a hopeless seeking for reality beyond eighteenth-century rationalism. True; but only the peculiarly Spanish response to this situation explains Goya.

Nevertheless, Bolivar could speak openly as a theocrat. When Venezuela was backsliding, hear him rebuke Páez:

The national voice was one: reforms and Bolivar. No one has recused me, no one has degraded me; who, then, shall snatch from me the reins of command? Your friends! You! what do you not owe me, all you in Venezuela? Yourself, do you not owe me your existence? . . . I desire to know if you obey and if my country acknowledges me its chief. God forbid those of my own hearth should dispute my authority, as with Mohamet whom the earth adored and his compatriots combatted. . . .

But this (1826) was already fever of the decline? Hear him then from the beginning. One word common to Bolivar after the conversion on the way to Curaçao reveals the imperial note. In letters to friends, to family, to generals, to strangers and opponents; in every kind of communication official or intimate, happy or bitter, one disturbing term recurs. It is *mi gloria*: Bolivar's norm of act, motive of decision.

It is always rash to transliterate a term. *Amor* is not *amour*, nor close to *amorous*; *désir* and *desear* are not *desire*; honesty corresponds with neither *honestidad* nor *honnêteté*. Even *cristiano* differs from *christian* as life on the Tagus or the Orinoco from life on the Thames or the Connecticut. The reason is that the identical word has a collective, psychological content which varies from one country to another. While the Hispanic is not the Anglo-Saxon, *mi gloria* will never be *my glory*. But Bolivar's use is not that of his own countrymen. What Bolivar meant by it, from 1812 when he first knew himself, is suggested in English by responsibility and mission, as an anointed king with unction might use the words.

Bolivar was the last true king of the Hispanic spirit. To his great predecessors, freedom meant the grace of the Church, and all Spain's soldiers and inquisitors were there to force this freedom upon every man. Bolivar refused the theocratic definition within the Necessity of the Church, but he retained the concept of a vast political unit, of *its* necessity and of salvation within it. After Ayacucho, the huge Andean land from Venezuela to Chile seemed about to become a modulation of Spain's ideal



empire: there would be no slaves, in terms of modern liberalism men would be free within a great but aloof state; in lieu of Spain's dissolving City of God, a City of Man which Bolivar's Panama would project to the hemisphere and beyond it. Of course, the canvas tore before the picture could be painted; and Bolivar knew. But while he knew, his fighting within the sense of history, his conscious destiny of failure, was regal. Only little kings succeed, he knew; the great who greatly strive become heroes of tragedy. He acted his tragic part.

As he lay dying in the Spaniard's house near royalist Santa Marta, legend has Bolivar say: "History's three greatest fools: Jesus, Don Quixote, and I." The story, almost certainly untrue, reveals a truth. These three refused the common division of divine knowledge from existence; were heroes of the principle of wholeness. Jesus, having found God within himself (the ecstasy he meant, when he said: "the kingdom of heaven is within you") needed, because he was a Jew, not a Greek, to impart his good news to all his brethren — who let him die on the Cross. The old knight of La Mancha, loving justice, needed, because he was a Spaniard, to *enact* justice in the modern world — and had his teeth knocked out. Bolivar translated into act Spain's mystic will to make an empire . . . not for power like Rome, not for profit like Britain . . . *for all men and for the whole man* — and deeply lived the monstrous frustration within the marrow of reality.

The hundred years after Bolivar, the first century of the republics, marked the final phase of Spain's American kingdoms. Bolivar in his will to create American union sped the process of disintegration. The last great king of a world almost gone became the prophet of a world not yet here.

## LEGEND AND MYTH

THE THEODEMOCRATIC spirit lived on, not in the government and economy of the republics, but in the people: their intimate lives, their poets, their myths.

Legend expresses the self-love of a race; its past, present, future, it stocks with heroes and foes biting the dust; with goddesses in groves, with monsters at ocean's edge, with a Washington pleurably shrunk to the paragon boy who could not tell a lie. Legend may use facts, provided they are rigged to flatter the ego of the people. Bolivar was a legend years before he died. Since the people's mixed bloods and long servitude made them suspect to themselves, Bolivar had to be the world's "greatest warrior," the world's "greatest statesman," the world's "greatest lover." His black legend flourished also. To the "little nation" men, to the egos hurt by his own, to the libertarian fanatics, he was the satanic tyrant, the fraudulent soldier "who never won a battle." Historians like Rafael Villamizar and José Sañudo (of Pasto) still sedulously extract from Bolivar's troubled years a pattern of incompetence and cunning, somewhat in the legalistic manner of Edgar Lee Masters' *Lincoln the Man*. But preponderantly as the century grew, the legend became heroic. Every political creed cut the man to its measure. Bolivar favored a life-presidency, therefore he justified dictators; Bolivar was an authoritarian, therefore a school of "democratic caesarism" made him its model; Bolivar toward the close of his career leaned on the Church, therefore the Church reactionaries leaned on him. These are all processes of legend.

Myth is legend (and history) transfigured; it is born when the collective spirit of a folk knows its relation with the universal. Like legend, myth tells a story, but now the tale speaks with the voice of human fate.<sup>4</sup> One individual or event may make both legend and myth. Prometheus, legendary fire-bringer who incurs the wrath of jealous gods, becomes the myth of the tragedy of genius. The legend of Oedipus becomes the psychological myth of man's innate anxiety. Long before Philo and long after, the Jewish fathers transposed Bible

<sup>4</sup> The Myth in this sense is deeply studied in the books of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. The dynamic infusion of Myth into the technics, institutions and aesthetic forms of our culture is profoundly analyzed in the great tetralogy of Lewis Mumford: *Technics and Civilization*, *The Culture of Cities*, *The Condition of Man*, *The Conduct of Life*. Juan Larrea, the Spanish essayist and art critic has, in a number of significant books, applied the great Hispanic Myths to the New World.

legend into myth: the expulsion from bliss of Adam and Eve, because they partook of the tree of knowledge; the curse of Cain who would not be his brother's keeper; the confusion of tongues visited upon men who aspired to build to Heaven; Abraham's sacrifice of his son for faith and the everlasting Covenant with which he was rewarded . . . these are all legend deepened to myth.

The birth of legend and myth does not cease. There is, for instance, the legendary Lincoln. He is the rail-splitter, home-spun honest Abe, lifted by the prescience of his people to free the slave, to save the Union. "We," the legend has the people say, "were humble and poor like Lincoln. When we needed him, we produced him. Now behold us rich, safe, free." Against this legend with its half-truths and whole evasions, there is also the myth of Lincoln. It gives us the man of sorrows who learned, before he died, the guilt of all Americans in the great conflict, and took the guilt unto himself; the man whose death presaged the era of defeat for the values he loved, and whom we love for his sorrow and because, betraying his values, we still need and love them.

Legend of course links Bolivar with Washington; myth will neighbor him with Lincoln. They differed in culture and class, in temperament and talents: who could be less like the coruscant aristocrat of Caracas than the Kentucky peasant who made his way "up" to the middle class, the slow-moving, loose-limbed homely giant who perhaps bathed less frequently in the White House than Bolivar campaigning in the jungle? Only in genius were they peers. Both presided over a civil war, an irrepressible conflict whose outcome was certain. Spain *had* to withdraw before America, as surely as slavery and the paramount sovereignty of agricultural states *had* to withdraw before industrial capitalism. Therefore both war-leaders may be said to have pursued the bloodiest, the most wasteful of all methods for achieving a foregone conclusion. But both within the conflict lived and knew beyond it, and thereby were doomed. Lincoln expressed the spiritual quality of his Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture which his Bible bespoke, the frontier preserved,

and the Gilded Age that inherited his victory denied. His death at the illusory moment of triumph was no chance act of a madman, but a symbol of the eclipse of his America. And we Americans, children of these generations of eclipse, love him because we dearly love what we have lost. Lincoln's archaic face of sorrow is *our own*, beneath the commerce-smile, the comfort-smirk, the power-mask. Bolivar within the chaos of his people expressed *their* mastering need: order and unity. As Lincoln naturally spoke in Bible cadence, Bolivar naturally found the accent of the great Roman writers. He released chaos and it doomed him. But he personifies the tradition of his culture, its challenge and its potential in America to create a new world from chaos.

#### THE ATLANTIC WORLD IN BOLIVAR

HIS STORY has revealed Bolivar's tragic errors. He relied too desperately on the State, and by the irresistible pressure of his personality, equated the State with himself. He understood the psychology of his peoples; knew that arms and political law could not re-direct their roots. But he lacked other working methods. Therefore he gave *himself*, instinctively knowing that in his life was a power of organic re-creation profounder than law and battle. His campaigns of the warrior and the statesman have vanished. But the man who dared incarnate the dream of a new world for Man, with himself, and with the flesh and passion of America, lives now more urgently than ever, as the need of that world grows tragically greater.

Thus, the final value of Bolivar is the man. His ecumenical politics, expressed in the project of Panama — a project he shared with many and knew he could not fulfill — was a mere surface. But surface is important; it is the medium of the experience of form and content. Bolivar foresaw an American league of nations pledged against war, committed to the arbitrament of disputes, dedicated to the personal liberty of its citizens. This league, from its international seat upon its inter-

American canal, would not stop at the western hemisphere; it must eventually embrace Spain and western Europe. This was Bolivar's "Atlantic world" — and his whole world.<sup>5</sup> He was unconscious of Asia. On the Pacific, he always turned eastward to the Atlantic. But unlike the Mirandas and Monteagudos who schooled his ecumenical vision, although he ignored Asia and Africa, Bolivar's instinct toward men contained both these continents. No statesman of either America shares Bolivar's absolute acceptance of all the racial elements of America. He does not, like Lincoln, feel impelled to distinguish between a sought "justice" and a denied "equality"; he does not, like the abolitionists, sentimentalize and romanticize. Simply . . . quite simply, he subsumes the presence of Africa and Asia<sup>6</sup> in the American world: plasma of its problems, plasma of his love. By paradox, Bolivar's cruel execution of Manuel Piar proves his indifference to race; if he had been emotionally troubled by the color problem, he would have feared to exacerbate it by the sacrifice of this pardo. In all Bolivar's writings and in all his acts, although he analyzed with insight the ethnic nature of the American peoples, there is no trace of emotional reaction because of any man's race or color. In the dark-skinned American and in the Indian, Bolivar accepted Africa and Asia. Nothing less complete, now that the West's imperialism wanes, must be the spirit of the West in order to be accepted by Africa and Asia; must be the spirit of the United States to be accepted by America Hispana.

The Americas are the minority hemisphere, they are an island within the globe's one overwhelming land mass. We of the North have not in the past needed to know this; our technological advance, which we shared with a few countries on the edge of Europe (that western nub of Asia), gave us security and indeed made us aggressors and exploiters. As technics

<sup>5</sup> See the author's *America Hispana* (1931): chapter VI, *The Atlantic World*.

<sup>6</sup> The Negro, of course, is Africa; the Indian is Asia. Although there is much disagreement among anthropologists about the route or various routes by which the Indians came to the American continents, they all concur that the original provenance of the race is Asia.

spread through the world, our precedence and security become illusion. At last, in deep crisis, we know this. We grow self-conscious. If we would survive, we must learn that force, whatever temporary victories it bring, cannot prevail over the huge demotic odds against us. Force cannot bind even America Hispana to our North; if we rely on it, even our minority hemisphere will split asunder.

We have a stronger weapon: our Great Tradition which has taught the brotherhood of man under God and God's potential presence in every human being. If we have faith in this Tradition, the creator of Europe and of America, we must have faith in the strength that it can give us. But only insofar as we strive to *enact* it. And this means to transfigure our economy, our political forms, our ethic and our arts.

Bolivar knew this. When he said: "the freedom of the world depends on the health of America," he meant this. The American nations have many heroes. Bolivar is the culture hero of our hemisphere. Not he, not his people, not the world, knew enough to lay the cornerstone of the American structure which, holding the principle of all mankind, shall be secure among mankind. But Bolivar's defeat lighted a sacrifice-fire by which we may behold America and begin to create it.

1948-1951

THE END

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Aside from their books, I owe a personal debt of gratitude to the late Dr. Julio Tello, outstanding Peruvian archaeologist, who was my first guide to the arts of ancient Peru; and to Dr. Juan Friede, the Colombian archaeologist who conducted me by horseback over one of Colombia's great Cordilleras to the marvels of San Agustín, deep in the South Colombian Andes.

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- Gonzalo Bulnes: *Bolívar en el Perú*. 2 vols. Madrid, 1919. This work by the Chilean historian is a rare example of objective history.
- Jorge Basadre: *Iniciación de la República en el Perú*.
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- Angel Isaac Chiriboga: *Campañas de la Libertad (en el Ecuador 1819-29)*. Quito, 1948.
- Juan de Castellanos: *Historia de Cartagena*. Bogotá, 1942.
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- Federico González Suárez: *Historia General del Ecuador*. Quito. A classic.
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- Antonio J. de Irisarri: *Historia Crítica del Asesinato del Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho (Sucre)*. Buenos Aires, 1936. The best account.
- Vicente Lecuna: *Crónica Razonada de las Guerras de Bolívar*. 3 vols. New York, The Colonial Press, 1950. A definitive scholarly account based squarely upon documentation not available before.
- Salvador de Madariaga: *Cuadro Histórico de las Indias (Intro. a Bolívar)*. Buenos Aires, 1945. An exhaustive, authoritative work, although it greatly understates the importance of the non-European races in the history of America Hispana.
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 Jules Mancini: *Bolivar et L'Emancipation des Colonies Espagnoles*. Paris, 1912.  
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 José Nucete-Sardi: *Aventura y Tragedia de F. de Miranda*. Caracas, 1950.  
 Ricardo Palma: *Bolívar en las Tradiciones peruanas*. Madrid, 1930. Gossip.  
 Carlos Pereyra: *Vida de Sucre*.  
 ——— *La Juventud Legendaria de Bolívar*. Madrid, 1932. An excellent corrective for such popular works as Mancini's and Larrazábal's.  
 G. Picón Febres: *Don Simón Rodríguez*. Caracas, 1939.  
 Mariano Picón-Salas. *Miranda*. Buenos Aires, 1946.  
 C. Parra-Pérez: *Miranda et la Revolución Française*. Paris, 1925.  
 Andrés Mirabel Ponce: *Simón Carreño o Simón Rodríguez*.  
 Andrés Ponte: *La Puebla de Bolívar, Caracas, 1946*. An interesting geographical and geneological "biography" of the Basque town where the family began, and of Bolívar's ancestors.  
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 Alfonso Rumazo González: *Manuela Sáenz*. Cali (Colombia), 1944.  
 José María Salaverría: *Bolívar el Libertador*. Madrid, 1930.  
 J. M. Seijas García: *Luis Brión*.  
 Luis Alberto Sucre: *Historial Geneológico del Libertador*. Caracas, 1936.  
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 Jorge Ricardo Vejerano: *Nariño; su vida, sus infortunios, su talla*. Bogotá, 1945.  
 L. Villanueva: *Vida de Don Antonio José de Sucre*. Caracas, 1945. Pontifical biography at its worst.  
 T. R. Ybarra: *Bolivar, the Passionate Warrior*. New York, 1929.

The above list is far from complete, and there must be works more worthy of mention than many I have seen and listed. Miranda has fared better in his biographies than most of the great figures of the age: Robertson's *Life* is definitive, Picon-Sala's briefer biography is excellent. I have found no adequate biography of Sucre or Santander, of Páez, Rodríguez or Manuela Sáenz. Carlos Pereyra, able historian, fails in his *Life of Sucre*. Cunningham-Grahame's

famous work on Páez is shockingly inaccurate. Mitre's biography of San Martín is a classic, but the account of the interview with Bolívar is false; when Mitre wrote, the revealing documents had not been discovered and the Lafond forgery had not been exposed. Augusto Mijares of Caracas is at present engaged on a biography of Andrés Bello, which, to judge from this historian's published work, will be a standard contribution. Of the numerous biographies of Bolívar, that of Gerhard Masur is perhaps the most painstakingly faithful; that of Emil Ludwig is among the worst. The early memoirs — by O'Leary, Mosquera, Larrazábal, *et al.* — are maimed by hero-worship and insufficient perspective. Mancini, extremely readable, was not alert to the difference between fact and legend.

### “THE BLACK LEGEND”

H. Lafayette Villaume Ducoudray-Holstein: *Memoirs of Simon Bolívar*. 2 vols. London, 1830.

G. Hipsley: *Narrative of the Expedition to the Rivers Orinoco and Apure in South America*. London, 1829.

Antonio Obando: *Autobiografía*.

José Rafael Sañudo: *Estudios sobre la Vida de Bolívar*. Pasto, 1925.

Rafael Villamizar: *Crítica de Historia Colombiana*. 2 vols. Bogotá, 1940.

The first two works typify the not uncommon attitude of volunteer officers from Europe, who became disgruntled by what they deemed Bolívar's mistreatment of their high dignity. The last two are more serious criticisms of Bolívar, the man and the statesman, by Colombians of the party of Santander. The work of Obando is the *apologia pro vita sua* of the man who indubitably directed Sucre's assassination.

### CRITICAL WORKS

The best portraits of Bolívar and of his protagonists, the deepest interpretations of his cultural and political thought, are in the general historians (Baralt, Fortoul, Lecuna, Restrepo, Bulnes, *et al.*) and in the essays of writers ranging from Montalvo to Mijares. Many of these essays are to be found only in the pages of cultural magazines and of the *Boletines* of the Academies of the capital cities. Here are a few volumes of essays worthy of attention:

Eduardo Acevedo Latorre: *Colaboradores de Santander en la Organización de la República*. Bogotá, 1944.

Academia Colombiana de Historia: *Conferencias en Homenaje al General Francisco de Paula Santander*. Bogotá, 1940.

J. M. Arboleda Llorente: *El Indio en la Colonia*. Bogotá, 1948.

Pedro M. Arcaya: *Estudios de Sociología Venezolana*. Caracas.

———: *Estudios sobre Personajes y Hechos de la Historia Venezolana*. Caracas, 1911.

- V. A. Belaunde: *Bolivar and the Political Thought of the Spanish-American Revolution*. Baltimore, 1938.
- Rufino Blanco-Fombona: *La Evolución Política y Social de Hispano-America*. Angel Francisco Brice: *Santander Sentenciado por Urdaneta*. Caracas, 1948.
- Luis Correa: *Viaje Stendhaliano*. Caracas, 1940.
- J. A. Cova: *Ensayos*. Buenos Aires. (?)
- Luis Augusto Cuervo: *Ensayos Políticos*. Bogotá, 1947.
- *Apuntes Historiales*. Bogotá, 1925.
- Gilberto Freyre: *Una Cultura Ameaçada, A Luso-Brasileira*. Recife, 1946.
- Francisco Gardía Calderón: *Le Pérou Contemporain (étude sociale)* Paris, 1907.
- L. García Ortiz: *Algunos Estudios sobre Santander*. Bogotá, 1946.
- C. Hernández: *El estilo de Bolívar*. Bogotá, 1945.
- Cornelio Hispano: *Historia Secreta de Bolívar*. Bogotá, 1944.
- Carlos Irazábal: *Hacia la Democracia*. Mexico, 1939. A Marxian interpretation of Venezuelan history.
- Vicente Lecuna: *La Entrevista de Guayaquil (Restablecimiento de la verdad histórico)*. Caracas and Buenos Aires, 1948.
- J. G. Leguía: *Hombres y Ideas en el Peru*. Lima (1926?).
- *Historia y Biografía*. Lima (1926?).
- Augusto Mijares: *Hombres y Ideas en América*. Caracas, 1940.
- *Ensayo sobre la Interpretación Pessimista de la Sociología Hispano-Americana*. Caracas.
- José Carlos Mariátegui: *Siete Ensayos de Interpretación de la Realidad Peruana*. Lima, 1928.
- *La Escena Contemporánea*. Lima, 1926.
- Juan Montalvo (Ecuador), J. B. Alberdi (Argentina), José Martí (Cuba), R. Blanco-Fombona (Venezuela), José Veríssimo (Brazil), J. E. Rodó (Uruguay), Miguel de Unamuno (Spain), and ten others: *An anthology of essays on various aspects of Bolivar*.
- Nicolas E. Navarro: *La Política Religiosa del Libertador*. Caracas, 1933.
- Lucila L. de Pérez-Díaz: *Bolivianas (Ensayos historicos)*. Caracas, 1933.
- C. Parra-Perez: *Bolívar (Contribución al estudio de sus ideas políticas)*. Caracas, 1942.
- *Páginas de Historia y de Polémica*. Caracas, 1943.
- Aristides Rojas: *Leyendas Historicas de Venezuela*.
- Luis Alberto Sánchez: *Existe América Latina?* Mexico, 1945.
- *El Pueblo en la Revolución Americana*. Buenos Aires, 1942.
- *Los Poetas de la Revolución*. Lima. (?)
- Carlos Siso: *La Formación del Pueblo Venezolano*. New York, 1941.
- Francisco José Urrutia: *El Ideal internacional de Bolívar*. Quito, 1911.
- Laureano Vallencila Lanz: *Cesarismo Democrático*. Caracas, 1929.
- José Vasconcelos: *Bolivarismo y Monroe-ismo*. Santiago de Chile, 1935.
- Jorge Ricardo Vejarano: *Origenes de la Independencia Sur-Americana*. Bogotá, 1925.

- Las Ideas Políticas de Bolívar. Bogotá.
- Carlos A Villanueva: La Monarquía en América: Bolívar y San Martín. Paris, 1912.
- Carlos A Vivanco: La Conjunción del 25 Setiembre. Quito, 1929.
- El Ecuador en la Independencia de América. Quito.

### BELLES LETTRES

Creative literature, its history and criticism, belong to the bibliography of sources of this book whose real subject is the *life* of Bolivarian America and its dynamic relation to our time. The best writers of America Hispana are perhaps its poets (also, its worst). I list no poets, since the reader equipped to understand their difficult idiom probably knows them already. The Bolivarian countries are, with two exceptions, rich in the social novel. And at least three possess organic criticisms of the national literature that rank, as cultural indices, with the best of the histories:

#### COLOMBIA:

- Baldomiro Sanín-Cano: Ensayos. Bogotá, 1942.
- De mi Vida y Otros Vidas. Bogotá, 1949.
- Antonio Gómez Restrepo: Historia de la Literatura Colombiana. 4 vols. Bogotá, 1945-46.

#### ECUADOR:

- Isaac Barrera: Historia de la Literatura Ecuatoriana. 2 vols. Quito, 1944.
- Angel F. Rojas: La Novela Ecuatoriana. Mexico, 1948.

#### PERU:

- Luis Alberto Sánchez: La Literatura Peruana; Derrotero para una Historia espiritual del Peru. 3 vols. Lima, 1928 — Santiago de Chile, 1936.
- America, Novela sin Novelistas. Lima, 1927.
- Nueva Historia de la Literatura Americana. Asunción del Paraguay, 1949.

I shall not attempt to give a complete list of the eloquent novels of the Bolivarian countries; but here are a few examples (beginning with Venezuela because of Rómulo Gallegos, the most distinguished novelist of America Hispana):

#### VENEZUELA:

- Rómulo Gallegos: Canaima.
- Pobre Negro.
- Doña Bárbara.
- Cantaclaro.
- Arturo Uslar-Pietri: Las Lanzas Coloradas.
- Red (short stories).
- Treinta Hombres y Sus Sombras.
- Julio Padrón: La Guaricha.
- Enrique Bernardo Núñez: Cubagua.



## BOLIVIA:

Fernando Ramírez Velarde: *Socavones de Angustia*.

## COLOMBIA:

Jorge Isaacs: *María*. 1867.

José Eustacio Rivera: *La Vorágine*. *Circa* 1925.

Eduardo Zalamea Borda: *Quatro Años á Bordo de Mi-mismo* (*Diario de los cinco sentidos*). 1948.

For reasons analysed in this book, Colombia has no social novel. These three are classic examples, representative of three generations, of the novel whose protagonist is Nature: in *María*, the lush central valleys; in *La Vorágine*, the devouring jungle; in the contemporary work of Zalamea Borda, the sensual, undifferentiated populace of the Granadan towns.

## PERU:

Enrique López Albújar: *Cuentos Andinos*. 1924.

——— *Matalache*. 1927.

Ciro Alegría: *El Mundo es Ancho y Ajeno*. 1941.

——— *La Serpiente de Oro*. 1936.

## ECUADOR:

This little country, although it has produced no name of the stature of Rómulo Gallegos, has (with the possible exception of Brazil) the most varied and second school of social novelists in America. Here are a few of its products:

Demetrio Aquilera Mata: *La Isla Virgen*.

José de la Cuadra: *Los Sangurimas*.

——— *Guasintón* (stories).

Joaquin Gallegos Lara: *Las Cruces Sobre el Agua*.

E. Gil Gilbert: *Nuestro Pan*.

——— *Los Relatos de Emmanuel* (stories).

Jorge Icaza: *Huasipungo*.

——— *Huairapamushkas*.

——— *Cholos*.

——— *Media Vida Deslumbrados*.

Luis A. Martínez: *A la Costa*.

Adalberto Ortiz: *Juyungo*.

A. Pareja Diez-Canseco: *Las Tres Ratas*.

——— *El Muelle*.

——— *Hombres sin Tiempo*.

Angel F. Rojas: *Un Idilio Bobo*.

Humberto Salvador: *La Novela Interrumpida*.

——— *La Fuente Clara*.

Pedro Jorge Vera: *Los Animales Puros*.

Short stories by José Fernández and Alfonso Cuesta y Cuesta.

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